



S O C O R R O

Resource Management Plan Revision and Environmental Impact Statement



BLM - Socorro Field Office

U.S. Department of the Interior

APPENDICES

April 2007



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of the public lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principals of multiple use and sustained yield, a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

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Appendix A

Planning Criteria



APPENDIX A PLANNING CRITERIA

GENERAL PLANNING CRITERIA

The following general planning criteria have guided the preparation of this Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement and will continue to guide land use decisions made in the future.

- Apply the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other applicable laws.
- Use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, social, and environmental aspects of public land management.
- Give priority to the identification, designation, protection, and special management of areas of critical environmental concern.
- Consider the relative significance of the public land products, services, and uses to local economies.
- Rely on available inventories of the public lands, their resources, and other values with updating the inventory to the extent necessary to reach sound management decisions.
- Consider present and potential uses of the public lands.
- Consider impacts of uses on adjacent or nearby non-Federal lands and on nonpublic land surface over federally owned minerals.
- Consider the relative scarcity of the values involved and the availability of alternative means (including recycling) and sites for realization of those values.
- Weigh long-term benefits and detriments against short-term benefits and detriments.
- Comply fully with applicable pollution control laws, regulations, and policies, including State and Federal air, water, noise, or other pollution standards or implementation plans.
- Coordinate Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource inventory, planning, and management activities with the resource planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies, State and local governments, and Native American Tribes to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public lands.
- Provide for public involvement including early notice and frequent opportunity for citizens and interested groups and others including Native American Tribes to participate in and comment on the preparation of plans and related guidance.
- Comply fully with all Federal laws that guide management of specific resources such as the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Taylor Grazing Act, and others.
- Comply fully with the BLM national policy on special status species that states "BLM shall carry out management consistent with the principles of multiple use, for the conservation of candidate (and sensitive) species and their habitats and shall ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out do not contribute to the need to list any of these species as threatened or endangered." (BLM 6840 Manual)

- Reflect Federal land management agency obligations under applicable Tribal treaties and laws or executive orders relating to Native American reserved rights, religious freedoms, traditional use areas, etc.

PLANNING CRITERIA SPECIFIC TO RESOLVING THE ISSUES FOR THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

As noted in Chapter 1, six issues have been identified that need to be resolved through the planning process. In addition to the general planning criteria identified above, other specific planning criteria have been developed to aid in resolving the issues. These criteria are described below and are the standards that BLM will consider in developing resolutions to the issues.

Issue 1. Which areas if any should be designated for special management, what designations should apply (areas of critical environmental concern, special management areas, or other), and how should they be managed?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Resource to be managed
- Manageability of the areas
- Existing areas of critical environmental concern representation
- Current and potential land uses
- Effects of designation on other resources and uses
- Effects of nondesignation on resources
- Social and economic effects
- Public interests and attitudes
- Consistency of designation with resource plans of other agencies, local government, or Tribes
- Long-term versus short-term benefit
- Public health and safety

Issue 2. What type of management should be undertaken at the watershed level to reduce erosion, improve surface water quality, maintain and improve vegetation, and reduce non-point source pollution?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Watershed condition and trend and productivity potential
- Resource values
- Current and potential land uses
- Social and economic effects
- Public interests and attitudes
- Condition and trend of native plant communities
- Presence of special status species, both plants and animals

- Need for increased vegetation cover to reduce soil erosion, increase livestock forage, improve wildlife habitat and improve water quality
- Habitat fragmentation/connectivity for all wildlife species
- Use of land treatments to maintain or improve plant communities
- Maintenance or enhancement of biological diversity
- Presence of noxious weeds and conflicts between exotic and native species
- Input from the scientific community

Issue 3. How should potential energy, fluid, and solid mineral development in the Planning Area be managed?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Resource values
- Current and potential land uses
- Social and economic effects
- Public interests and attitudes
- National energy policy
- Potential for alternative energy sources
- Input from the scientific community
- Reasonable foreseeable development of the resource
- Effects on other resources
- Habitat fragmentation/connectivity for all wildlife species
- Presence of special status species, both plant and animal and their habitats

Issue 4: How should travel and transportation including motorized vehicle use, off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, and others be managed to satisfy public demand while protecting the natural values of the public land?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Existing route network and designations
- Public demand for additional activities and locations
- Compatibility with adjacent land uses and resources
- Effects of vehicle uses on other resources and uses
- Public health and safety
- Social and economic effects
- Public access to public land
- Needs of other resource uses

- Route designation and closure criteria (as described in Appendix J)

Issue 5: What land use allocations or lands and realty program initiatives need to be addressed in the plan to accommodate the effective management and support of other resource programs within the area?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Current and future uses of public land
- Social and economic effects
- Public interest and attitudes
- Compatibility of adjacent land uses and resources
- Public access to public lands
- Long-term versus short-term benefit

Issue 6: How should BLM best pursue cultural and recreational initiatives to provide the public with quality tourism and cultural heritage tourism opportunities?

To resolve this issue, BLM will consider:

- Current and future uses of public land
- Public interest and attitudes
- Social and economic effects
- Public access to public lands
- Local community and Tribal needs and interests
- Input from the scientific community
- Opportunities for local partnerships
- Long-term versus short-term benefit
- Site hardening and vulnerability to effects from visitation

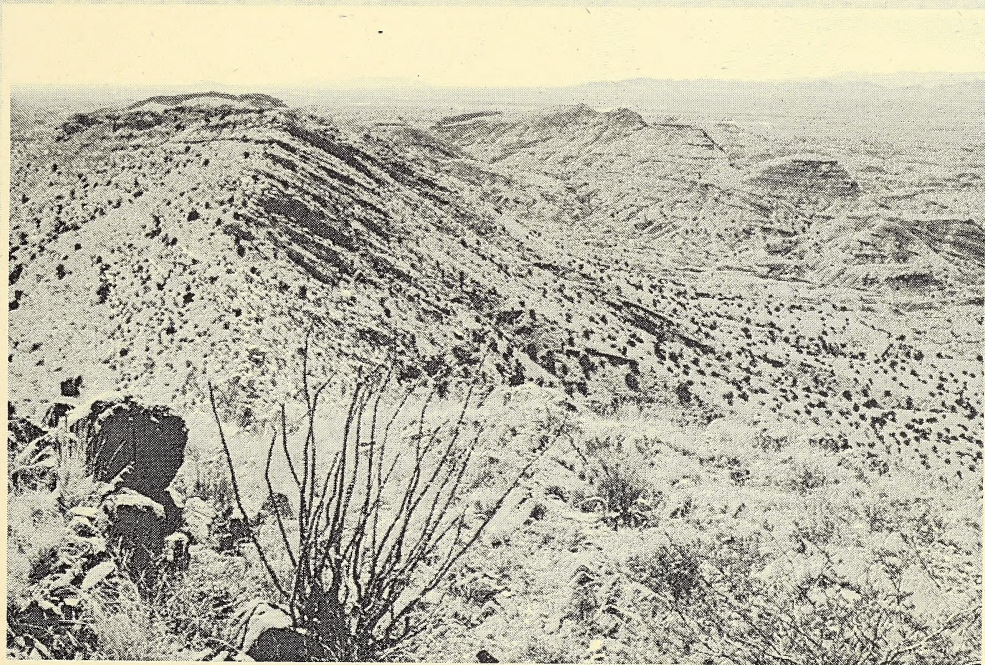
PLANNING CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In selecting the preferred alternative and the Resource Management Plan, BLM will consider:

- The degree of progress towards the identified management goals and resolution of issues
- The discretionary limits established through applicable laws, regulations, and agency policies
- Reasonable, feasible, and practical guidance for managing public lands and resources through a full range of options
- Adequacy for a complete land use plan

Appendix B

Legal Authorities and Mandates



APPENDIX B

ACTS OF AUTHORITY AND MANDATES FOR THE BLM

A number of Federal statutes have been enacted over time to establish and define the authority of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to make decisions on the management and use of resources on public land. Following is a list of major legal authorities relevant to BLM land use planning.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1701 et seq.) provides the authority for BLM land use planning. This statute and its implementing regulations define principles for the management of public land and its resources. This Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans that provide for the use of public land managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law. Through FLPMA, BLM is responsible for the balanced management of the public land and resources and their various values. FLPMA specifically states that public land will be managed under the principles of multiple use, and, further, indicates that multiple use includes harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment.

Section 102 (a) (7) and (8) sets forth the policy of the United States concerning the management of BLM lands.

Section 201 requires the Secretary to prepare and maintain an inventory of all BLM lands and their resource and other values, giving priority to areas of critical environmental concern, and, as funding and workforce are available, to determine the boundaries of the public lands, provide signs and maps to the public, and provide inventory data to state and local governments.

Section 202 (a) requires the Secretary, with public involvement, to develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans that provide by tracts or areas for the use of the BLM lands.

Section 202 (c) (9) requires that land use plans for BLM lands be consistent with Tribal plans and, to the maximum extent consistent with applicable Federal laws, with State and local plans.

Section 202 (d) provides that all public lands, regardless of classification, are subject to inclusion in land use plans, and that the Secretary may modify or terminate classifications consistent with land use plans.

Section 202 (f) and 309 (c) provide that Federal, State, and local governments and the public be given adequate notice and an opportunity to comment on the formulation of standards and criteria for, and to participate in, the preparation and execution of plans and programs for the management of the public lands.

Section 302 (a) requires the Secretary to manage BLM lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with, when available, land use plans developed under Section 202 of FLPMA, except that where a tract of BLM lands has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law, it shall be managed in accordance with such laws.

Section 302 (b) recognizes the entry and development rights of mining claimants, while directing the Secretary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands.

Section 603 specifically directs BLM to carry out a wilderness review of public land and directs the BLM to manage such lands in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness.

The National Environment Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) requires the consideration and public availability of information regarding the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The law further requires the Federal Authorized Officers to identify and describe the significant environmental issues associated with their decisions and to develop alternatives to a proposed action (including the alternative of no action). Federal Authorized Officers must disclose the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the decisions; adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided; the relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance of long-term productivity; and any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources made by the decision.

The Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7418) requires Federal agencies to comply with all Federal, state, and local requirements regarding the control and abatement of air pollution. This includes abiding by the requirements of state implementation plans. The Clean Air Act provides that each state is responsible for ensuring achievement and maintenance of air quality standards within its borders so long as such standards are at least as stringent as Federal standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1987, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251) establishes objectives to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's water. Upon passage of the Environmental Quality Acts and adoption of the water quality standards, State agencies were empowered to enforce water quality standards as long as they are at least as stringent as the Federal standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency. The State of New Mexico has not been delegated authority from the Federal Government for any of the major water quality programs under the CWA, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Pretreatment, Sludge Management, and Wetlands. Also, Section 404 of the CWA, administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, requires that "waters of the U.S." be protected by permits prior to dredge or fill activities occurring in such areas. Waters include intermittent streams, mud flats, and sand flats. Wetlands that meet jurisdictional criteria of Section 404 of the CWA are partially protected in that a permit is required prior to any dredge or fill activity occurring in such areas.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) provides a means whereby the ecosystems upon which threatened and endangered species depend may be conserved and to provide a program for the conservation of such threatened and endangered species (section 1531 (b), Purposes). The ESA requires all Federal agencies to seek to conserve threatened and endangered species, utilize applicable authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the ESA (Sec. 1531 (c) (1), Policy), and avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any species that is listed or proposed for listing as threatened and endangered or destroying or adversely modifying its designated or proposed critical habitat (Sec. 1536 (a), Interagency Cooperation). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for administration of this Act, which also requires all Federal agencies to consult (or confer) in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA with the Secretary of the Interior, through the USFWS and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service, to ensure that any Federal action (including land use plans) or activity is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species listed or proposed to be listed under the provisions of the ESA, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated or proposed critical habitat (Sec. 1536 (a), Interagency Cooperation, and 50 Code of Federal Regulation [CFR] 402). Mitigation measures are developed through the consultation process and are put forth as suggested conservation measures included in a formal USFWS Biological Opinion, which addresses whether the

proposed action would jeopardize the continued existence of any officially listed endangered or threatened species.

BLM Handbook H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning Handbook*, provides supplemental guidance for implementing the BLM land use planning requirements established by Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA and the regulations in 43 CFR 1600. The handbook provides guidance for preparing and amending land use plan decisions through the planning process, and for maintaining resource management plans. The handbook also provides guidance for developing implementation plans and program-specific and resource-specific decisions.

The Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement for New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Standards and Guidelines) established a set of standards and guidelines for public land health and guidelines for livestock grazing management in New Mexico. Standards of land health are expressions of physical and biological conditions or degree of function required for healthy and sustainable lands, and define minimum resource conditions that must be achieved. Standards describe conditions needed for healthy sustainable public rangelands and relate to all uses of public land. They provide the measure of resource quality and functioning condition by which the health of public lands will be assessed. In order to measure the effectiveness of each standard, a set of measurable indicators and associated criteria were identified. Specific standards and indicators are defined for upland sites, biotic communities (including native, threatened, endangered, and special status species), and riparian sites.

Guidelines are practices, methods, or techniques determined to be appropriate to ensure that standards can be met or that significant progress can be made toward meeting those standards. Guidelines are tools such as grazing systems, vegetative treatments, or improvement projects that help managers and permittees achieve standards. Guidelines for livestock grazing are described in the Standards and Guidelines. The livestock grazing guidelines were designed to improve public land health and are to be implemented at the watershed, allotment, or pasture level if it is determined that the standards are not being met, and livestock grazing is the cause. Guidelines for activities other than livestock grazing are not mandated through regulation; however, they may be developed should the need arise. If it is determined that the standards are not being met as a result of another activity (i.e., road placement, recreation, etc.), program leads would determine appropriate actions to ensure that standards can be met or that significant progress can be made toward meeting those standards.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1323) requires the Federal land manager to comply with all Federal, State, and local requirements, administrative authority, process, and sanctions regarding the control and abatement of water pollution in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 201) is designed to make the Nation's waters "drinkable" as well as "swimmable." Amendments in 1996 established a direct connection between safe drinking water and watershed protection and management.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (Public Law [P.L.] 89-72) gave the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to control hazardous waste from "cradle-to-grave." This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. The Act also set forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous wastes.

The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1241-1249) provides that the establishment of National Recreation and National Scenic Trails would closely follow original routes of national historic significance. The purpose of the Act is to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor

recreation needs of an expanding population and to promote the preservation of public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas, and historic resources of the Nation.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) requires the Federal land management agencies to identify potential river systems and then study them for potential designation as wild, scenic, or recreational rivers.

The Wilderness Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) authorizes the President to make recommendations to the Congress for Federal lands to be set aside for preservation as wilderness.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 U.S.C. 431-433) protects cultural and paleontological resources on Federal lands and authorizes the President to designate national monuments on Federal lands.

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470) secures, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the protection of archaeological resources and sites which are on public lands and Indian lands, to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals having collections of archaeological resources and data which were obtained before October 31, 1979.

The National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) expands protection of historic and archaeological properties to include those of national, state, and local significance and directs Federal agencies to consider the effects of proposed actions on properties eligible for or included in the National Register of Historic Places. The Act mandates that when Federal undertakings (i.e., Federal projects or Federally funded or licensed projects) are planned and implemented, the responsible Federal agencies give due consideration to historic properties (i.e., resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places), regardless of land status. Regulations for *Protection of Historic Properties* (36 CFR Part 800) define a process for demonstrating such consideration by consulting with the State Historic Preservation Officers, Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other interested organizations and individuals.

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 1996) establishes a national policy to protect and preserve the right of American Indians to exercise traditional Indian religious beliefs or practices.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. §461-467) defines a national policy to identify and preserve historic sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance. The law authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct surveys, collect and preserve data, and acquire historic and archaeological sites.

The Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469-469c) provides for preservation of archaeological and historical information that might otherwise be lost as a result of Federal construction projects and other Federally licensed activities and programs. This Act stipulates that up to one percent of the funding appropriated by Congress for Federal undertakings can be spent to recover, preserve, and protect archaeological and historical data. A subsequent amendment authorized the one percent limit to be administratively exceeded under certain circumstances.

The Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. §§3001-3013) protects the human remains of indigenous peoples and funerary objects, sacred objects, and items of cultural patrimony on Federal lands. The Act also provides for the repatriation of such remains and cultural items previously collected from Federal lands and in the possession or control of a Federal agency or Federally funded repository.

The Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections (36 CFR Part 79) stipulates standards for facilities that curate Federally owned archaeological collections, which include not only artifacts but also all associated records and reports, in order to ensure long-term preservation of such collections.

The White House Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments of 1994 set forth guidelines requiring Federal agencies to adhere to directives designed to ensure that the rights of sovereign tribal governments are fully respected

The Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-278) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior (with respect to land under the jurisdiction of the BLM) or the Secretary of Agriculture (with respect to land under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service), within 120 days after the request of an Indian tribe to enter into an agreement or contract to carry out a project to protect Indian forest land or rangeland (including a project to restore Federal land that borders on or is adjacent to such land) that meets specified criteria, to issue public notice of initiation of any necessary environmental review or of the potential of entering into such an agreement or contract under which the Indian tribe would carry out activities to achieve land management goals for Federal land under the Secretary's jurisdiction and bordering or adjacent to the Indian forest land or rangeland under the Indian tribe's jurisdiction.

The Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926, as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to lease or convey BLM lands for recreational and public purposes under specified conditions.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 460l-4, et seq.) provides funding to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources including but not limited to parks, trails, wildlife lands, and other lands and facilities desirable for individual active participation.

The Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976 (30 U.S.C. 201 [a] [3] [A] [i]) requires that coal leases be issued in conformance with a comprehensive land use plan.

The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.) requires application of unsuitability criteria prior to coal leasing and also to proposed mining operations for minerals or mineral materials other than coal.

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) authorizes the development and conservation of oil and gas resources.

The Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) requires that potential oil and gas resources be adequately addressed in planning documents; the social, economic, and environmental consequences of exploration and development of oil and gas resources be determined; and any stipulations to be applied to oil and gas leases be clearly identified.

The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 21 et seq.) allows the location, use, and patenting of mining claims on sites on public domain lands of the United States.

The Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 21a) establishes a policy of fostering development of economically stable mining and minerals industries, their orderly and economic development, and studying methods for disposal of waste and reclamation.

The Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001-1027) governs the lease of geothermal steam and related resources on public lands. The Act prohibits issuing geothermal leases on virtually all USFWS-administered lands.

The Minerals Material Disposal Act of 1947, as amended establishes the authority under which BLM disposes of timber and other vegetative and forest products.

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315) establishes grazing districts of vacant, unappropriated and unreserved land from any parts of the public domain, excluding Alaska, which are not national forests, parks and monuments, Indian reservations, railroad grant lands, or revested Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands, and which are valuable chiefly for grazing and raising forage crops, and uses a permitting system to manage livestock grazing in the districts. In addition, the Act provides for the protection, administration, regulation and improvement of the grazing districts; promotes the adoption of regulations and cooperative agreements necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Act; regulates occupancy and use; preserves the land and resources from destruction or unnecessary injury; and provides for orderly improvement and development of the range. The Act also allows for the continuing study of erosion and flood control and performance of work to protect and rehabilitate areas subject to the Act. Willful violations of the Act, or of its rules and regulations, are punishable by fine.

The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901) provides that the public rangelands be managed so that they become as productive as feasible in accordance with management objectives and the land use planning process established pursuant to 43 U.S.C. 1712.

The Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988 (43 CFR 37.11[C] & [F]) provides protection for caves containing significant resources such as geological, biological, historical, cultural, etc.

The Healthy Forest Initiative Act of 2002 expanded stewardship contracting authority, among other provisions including accelerating unnecessary delays and removing barriers to forest and rangeland restoration activities.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148) outlines administrative procedures for hazardous-fuel-reduction projects on Forest Service and BLM lands to reduce wildfire risks to communities, municipal water supplies, and other at-risk Federal land and to protect, enhance, and restore forest ecosystem components.

The Carlson-Foley Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-583) directs Federal agencies to enter upon lands under their jurisdiction having noxious plants (weeds), and destroy noxious plants growing on such land.

The Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (7 U.S.C. 2801-2814) provides for the control and management of nonindigenous weeds that injure or have the potential to injure the interests of agriculture and commerce, wildlife resources, or the public health. The Act requires that each Federal agency develop a management program to control undesirable plants on Federal lands under the agency's jurisdiction; establish and adequately fund the program; implement cooperative agreements with state agencies to coordinate management of undesirable plants on Federal lands; establish integrated management systems to control undesirable plants targeted under cooperative agreements. A Federal agency is not required to carry out management programs on Federal lands unless similar programs are being implemented on state or private lands in the same area.

The Act also directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to coordinate programs for control, research, and educational efforts associated with noxious weeds. The Secretaries must identify regional control priorities and disseminate technical information to interested State, local, and private entities.

The Plant Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-224) prohibits the import, export, and movement in interstate commerce, or mailing of any plant pest unless authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture; authorizes the Secretary to prohibit or restrict the import, export, or movement in interstate commerce of any plant, plant product, biological control organism, noxious weed, or means of conveyance to prevent the introduction or dissemination of a plant pest or noxious weed; and combines all or a portion of 11 acts or resolutions into one act.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703-712) implements various treaties and conventions between the United States and Canada, Japan, Mexico, and the former Soviet Union for the protection of migratory birds. Under the Act, taking, killing, or possessing migratory birds is unlawful.

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661-667) proposes to assure that fish and wildlife resources receive equal consideration with other values during the planning of water resources development projects. The Act requires coordination with USFWS by the U.S. Department of Energy when a project is planned that may affect a body of water. It also requires coordination with the head of the state agency that administers wildlife resources in the affected state.

The Sikes Act of 1960, as amended (16 U.S.C. 670 et seq.) seeks to promote effectual planning, development, maintenance, and coordination of wildlife, fish, and game conservation and rehabilitation in military reservations.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911) authorizes financial and technical assistance to the states for the development, revision, and implementation of conservation plans and programs for nongame fish and wildlife.

The Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (16 U.S.C. 1331) places all wild and free roaming horses and burros under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Interior for the purpose of management and protection to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands. The Act calls for the maintenance of current population inventories, provides for the humane destruction of sick or lame animals, and allows for adoption by qualified individuals in the case of excess populations.

Executive Order 11644 - Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands (as amended by Executive Order 11989) (37 *Federal Register* 2877 [1971]), establishes policies and provides for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, promote the safety of all users of those lands, and minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.

Executive Order 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (49 *Federal Register* 7629 [1994]) requires that each Federal agency consider the impacts of its programs on minority populations and low-income populations.

Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites (61 *Federal Register* 26771 [1996]), requires Federal agencies to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

Executive Order 13287 – Preserve America directs Federal agencies to provide leadership in preserving America's heritage by actively advancing the protection, enhancement and contemporary use of historic and paleontological properties owned by the government, emphasizing partnerships. Under this order,

agencies shall cooperate with communities to increase opportunities for public benefit from, and access to, Federally owned historic and paleontological properties.

Executive Order 13084 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments provides, in part, that each Federal agency shall establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indian Tribal governments in the development of regulatory practices on Federal matters that significantly or uniquely affect their communities.

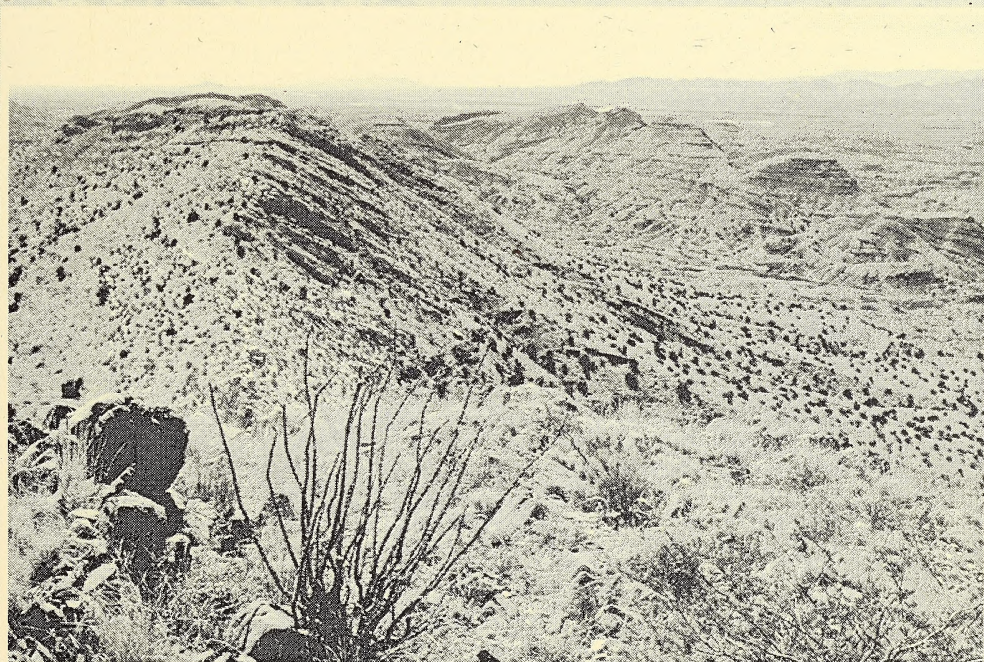
Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species provides that no Federal agency shall authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species unless, pursuant to guidelines that it has prescribed, the agency has determined and made public its determination that the benefits of such actions clearly outweigh the potential harm caused by invasive species; and that all feasible and prudent measures to minimize risk or harm will be taken in conjunction with the actions.

Secretarial Order 3175 (incorporated into the Departmental Manual at 512 DM 2) requires that if Department of the Interior agency actions might impact Indian trust resources, the agency explicitly address those potential impacts in planning and decision documents, and the agency consult with the Tribal government whose trust resources are potentially affected by the Federal action.

Secretarial Order 3206 – American Indian Tribal Rights, Federal-Tribal Trust Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act requires the U.S. Department of the Interior agencies to consult with Indian Tribes when agency actions to protect a listed species, as a result of compliance with the ESA, affect or may affect of Indian lands, Tribal trust resources, or the exercise of American Indian Tribal rights.

Appendix C

Best Management Practices



APPENDIX C

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

Best management practices (BMPs) are those land and resource management techniques designed to maximize beneficial results and minimize negative impacts of management actions. BMPs are defined as methods, measures, or practices selected on the basis of site-specific conditions to provide the most effective, environmentally sound, and economically feasible means of managing an activity and mitigating its impacts. Interdisciplinary site-specific analysis is necessary to determine which management practices would be necessary to meet specific goals. BMPs include, but are not limited to, structural and nonstructural controls, operations, and maintenance procedures. BMPs can be applied before, during, and after pollution-producing or surface disturbing activities to reduce or eliminate the introduction of pollutants into receiving waters (40 Code of Federal Regulation 130.2(m), Environmental Protection Agency Water Quality Standards Regulation) or to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of resources.

BMPs are identified as part of the National Environmental Policy Act process, with interdisciplinary involvement. Because the control of nonpoint sources of pollution and prevention of damage to other resources is an ongoing process, continual refinement of BMP design is necessary. This process can be described in five steps, which are: (1) selection of design of a specific BMP; (2) application of BMP; (3) monitoring; (4) evaluation; and (5) feedback. Data gathered through monitoring is evaluated and used to identify changes needed in BMP design, application, or in the monitoring program.

BMPs described in this appendix are a compilation of existing policies and guidelines and commonly-employed practices designed to assist in achieving the objectives for maintaining or minimizing water quality degradation from nonpoint sources, loss of soil productivity, providing guidelines for aesthetic conditions within watersheds, and mitigating impacts to soil, vegetation, or wildlife habitat from surface disturbing activities. BMPs are selected and implemented as necessary, based on site-specific conditions, to meet a variety of resource objectives for specific management actions. Therefore, this document does not provide an exhaustive list of BMPs, as additional BMPs or modifications may be identified to minimize the potential for negative impacts when evaluating site-specific management actions through an interdisciplinary process.

In addition, implementation and effectiveness of BMPs need to be monitored to determine whether the practices are achieving resource objectives and accomplishing desired goals. Adjustments will be made as necessary.

Each of the following BMPs are a part of the coordinated development of this Resource Management Plan and may be updated as new information becomes available to ensure objectives are met and to conform with changes in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulations, policy, direction, or new scientific information. Applicants also may suggest alternate procedures that could accomplish the same result. These guidelines will apply, where appropriate, to all use authorizations, including BLM-initiated projects. Any BMP listed may be used in any program wherever it may be effective.

ROAD DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

- 1) Design roads to minimize total disturbance, to conform with topography, and to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns.

- 2) Base road design criteria and standards on road management objectives such as traffic requirements of the proposed activity and the overall transportation objectives, and minimizing damage to the environment.
- 3) Locate roads on stable terrain such as ridgetops, natural benches, and flatter transitional slopes near ridges and valley bottoms and moderate sideslopes and away from slumps, slide prone areas, concave slopes, clay beds, and where rock layers dip parallel to the slope. Locate roads on well-drained soil types; avoid wet areas.
- 4) Construct cut and fill slopes to be approximately 3(h):1(v) or flatter where feasible. Locate roads to minimize heights of cutbanks. Avoid high, steeply sloping cutbanks in highly fractured bedrock.
- 5) Avoid head walls, midslope locations on steep, unstable slopes, fragile soils, seeps, old landslides, sideslopes in excess of 70 percent, and areas where the geologic bedding planes or weathering surfaces are inclined with the slope. Implement extra mitigation measures when these areas cannot be avoided.
- 6) Construct roads for surface drainage by using outslopes, crowns, grade changes, drain dips, waterbars and/or insloping to ditches as appropriate.
- 7) Sloping the road base to the outside edge for surface drainage is normally recommended for local spurs or minor collector roads where traffic volume is low and lower traffic speeds are anticipated. This is also recommended in situations where long intervals between maintenance will occur and where minimum excavation is wanted. Out-sloping is not recommended on steep slopes. Sloping the road base to the inside edge is an acceptable practice on roads with steep sideslopes and where the underlying soil formation is very rocky and not subject to appreciable erosion or failure.
- 8) Crowning and ditching are recommended for arterial and collector roads where traffic volume, speed, intensity and user comfort are considerations. Recommended gradients range from 0 to 15 percent where crowning and ditching may be applied, as long as adequate drainage away from the road surface and ditch lines is maintained.
- 9) Minimize excavation when constructing roads through the use of balanced earthwork, narrowing road widths, and end hauling where sideslopes are between 50 and 70 percent.
- 10) If possible, construct roads when soils are dry and not frozen. When soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of 3 inches, BLM-authorized activities should be limited or cease unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer.
- 11) Consider improving inadequately surfaced roads that are to be left open to public traffic during wet weather with gravel or pavement to minimize sediment production and maximize safety.
- 12) Retain vegetation on cut slopes unless it poses a safety hazard or restricts maintenance activities. Roadside brushing of vegetation should be done in a way that prevents disturbance to root systems and visual intrusions (i.e., avoid using excavators for brushing).
- 13) Retain adequate vegetation between roads and streams to filter runoff caused by roads.

- 14) Avoid riparian/wetland areas where feasible; locate in these areas only if the roads do not interfere with the attainment of proper functioning condition and riparian management objectives.
- 15) Minimize the number of unimproved stream crossings. When a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-through (low water crossings) on stable rock portions of the drainage channel. Harden crossings with the addition of rock and gravel if necessary. Use angular rock if available.
- 16) Locate roads and limit activities of mechanized equipment within stream channels to minimize their influence on riparian areas. When stream crossing is necessary, design the approach and crossing perpendicular to the channel where practical. Locate the crossing where the channel is well defined, unobstructed, and straight.
- 17) Avoid placing fill material in floodplain unless the material is large enough to remain in place during flood events.
- 18) Use drainage dips instead of culverts on roads where gradients would not present a safety issue. Locate drainage dips in such a way so water would not accumulate or where outside berms prevent drainage from the roadway. Locate and design drainage dips immediately upgrade of stream crossings and provide buffer areas and catchment basins to prevent sediment from entering the stream.
- 19) Construct catchment basins, brush windrows, and culverts in a way to minimize sediment transport from road surfaces to stream channels. Install culverts in natural drainage channels in a way to conform with the natural streambed gradients to outlets that discharge onto rocky or hardened protected areas.
- 20) Design and locate water crossing structures in natural drainage channels to accommodate adequate fish passage, provide for minimum impacts to water quality, and capable of handling a 100-year event for runoff and floodwaters.
- 21) Use culverts that pass, at a minimum, a 50-year storm event and/or have a minimum diameter of 24 inches for permanent stream crossings and a minimum diameter of 18 inches for road cross drains.
- 22) Replace undersized culverts and repair or replace damaged culverts and downspouts. Provide energy dissipaters at culvert outlets or drainage dips.
- 23) Locate culverts or drainage dips in such a manner as to avoid discharge onto unstable terrain such as head walls or slumps. Provide adequate spacing to avoid accumulation of water in ditches or road surfaces. Culverts should be placed on solid ground to avoid road failures.
- 24) Proper sized aggregate and riprap should be used during culvert construction. Place riprap at culvert entrance to streamline water flow and reduce erosion.
- 25) Establish adapted vegetation on all cuts and fill immediately following road construction and maintenance.
- 26) Remove berms from the downslope side of roads, consistent with safety considerations.

- 27) Leave abandoned roads in a condition that provides adequate drainage without further maintenance. Close abandoned roads to traffic. Physically obstruct the road with gates, large berms, trenches, logs, stumps, or rock boulders as necessary to accomplish permanent closure.
- 28) Abandon and rehabilitate roads no longer needed. Leave these roads in a condition that provides adequate drainage. Remove culverts.
- 29) When plowing snow for winter use of roads, provide breaks in snow berms to allow for road drainage. Avoid plowing snow into streams. Plow snow only on existing roads.
- 30) Maintenance should be performed to conserve existing surface material, retain the original crowned or out-sloped, self-draining cross section, prevent or remove rutting berms (except those designed for slope protection) and other irregularities that retard normal surface runoff. Avoid wasting loose ditch or surface material over the shoulder where it can cause stream sedimentation or weaken slump-prone areas. Avoid undercutting back slopes.
- 31) Do not disturb the toe of cut slopes while pulling ditches or grading roads. Avoid sidecasting road material into streams.
- 32) Grade roads only as necessary. Maintain drain dips, waterbars, road crown, in-sloping and out-sloping, as appropriate, during road maintenance.
- 33) Maintain roads in special management areas according to special management area guidance. Generally, retain roads within existing disturbed areas and side cast material away from the special management area.
- 34) When landslides occur, save all soil and material usable for reclamation or stockpile for future reclamation needs. Avoid side casting of slide material where it can damage, overload, and saturate embankments, or flow into down-slope drainage courses. Reestablish vegetation as needed in areas where vegetation has been destroyed due to side casting.
- 35) Strip and stockpile topsoil ahead of construction of new roads, if feasible. Reapply soil to cut and fill slopes prior to revegetation.

SURFACE-DISTURBING ACTIVITIES

- 1) Special design and reclamation measures may be required to protect scenic and natural landscape values. This may include transplanting trees and shrubs, mulching and fertilizing disturbed areas, removal of surfacing material, imprinting, irrigation, use of low profile permanent facilities, and painting to minimize visual contrasts. Surface-disturbing activities may be moved to avoid sensitive areas or to reduce the visual effects of the proposal.
- 2) Above ground facilities requiring painting should be designed to blend in with the surrounding environment.
- 3) Surface disturbance will be restricted in areas that have special topographic (steep or broken terrain and/or benches) and soil concerns in order to reduce impacts caused by soil erosion and habitat disturbance. Development in these areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will contain site-specific mitigation designed to prevent increased sediment from being transported into drainages and to prevent fragmentation of areas determined to provide important wildlife habitat.

- 4) In areas that allow for off-road travel, minimize the off-road impact of large vehicles. Use wide, flat-tread, balloon tires (especially on seismic thumper trucks) where possible. Use all-terrain vehicles rather than large vehicles where possible.
- 5) Only excavate topsoil and subsoil where it is absolutely necessary. Consider brush-beating, mowing, and/or parking on vegetation for surface disturbing activities.
- 6) Disturbed areas should be contoured to blend with the natural topography. Blending is defined as reducing form, line, and color contrast associated with the surface disturbance. Disturbance should be contoured to match the original topography, where matching is defined as reproducing the original topography and eliminating form, line, and color caused by the disturbance as much as possible.
- 7) Interim reclamation should be implemented concurrent with construction and site operations to the fullest extent possible. Final reclamation actions shall be initiated within 6 months of the termination of operations unless otherwise approved in writing by the authorized officer.
- 8) Fill material should be pushed into cut areas and up over back slopes. Depressions should not be left that would trap water or form ponds unless the Authorized Officer has determined that dips or depressions may be used to assist reclamation efforts and seed propagation.
- 9) Reclaimed soil will be free of contaminants and will have adequate depth, texture, and structure to provide for successful vegetation reclamation. Vegetation reclamation will be considered successful when healthy, mature perennials are established with a composition and density that closely approximates the surrounding vegetation as prescribed by the BLM, and the reclamation area is free of noxious weeds.
- 10) If necessary after reclamation, a BLM-standard barbed wire fence will be constructed to exclude livestock for a minimum of at least two successful growing seasons.
- 11) The project proponent will include a restoration plan for habitat of special status species when the BLM determines it is appropriate. The restoration plan will be developed in consultation with, and approved by, the BLM.
- 12) Additional reclamation measures may be required based on the conditions existing at the time of abandonment.
- 13) Oil and fuel for equipment and vehicles must be carefully handled and disposed to prevent soil or water contamination.
- 14) Develop a spill contingency plan which identifies all actions to be taken in the event of a chemical spill including phone numbers for Federal, State, and local agencies which must be notified.
- 15) Time activities to avoid wet periods.

OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

- 1) Field development plans are encouraged to minimize unnecessary disturbance. Field development plans should address sensitive area avoidance or mitigation, potential road, utility, and well locations, road classes, and plans for interim and final reclamation.

- 2) Dual completion, re-completion, commingling (both downhole and at the surface), the drilling of multiple wells from a single location, and centralized tank batteries will be encouraged and permitted in order to reduce the number of new well pads and consequent surface disturbance. This will reduce impacts to soil and vegetation, reduce air impacts caused by dust, reduce habitat fragmentation, and offer less opportunity for the spread of noxious weeds.
- 3) Operators will be encouraged to unitize in areas of dense development to increase management efficiency and facilitate operations in sensitive areas. Unitization is the process by which multiple lease holders in a geographic area share facilities so as to reduce surface disturbance caused by multiple duplicate facilities such as pipelines and compressor stations.
- 4) Reduce the size of the well pad whenever possible, without compromising safety.
- 5) Remote monitoring of wells and related production equipment is encouraged to reduce wildlife disturbance and road deterioration.
- 6) Pipelines associated with oil and gas activities will follow existing roads and rights-of-way corridors where possible to minimize surface disturbance.
- 7) The burial of pipelines associated with oil and gas exploration, development, production, and transportation is preferred. Pipelines greater than 4 inches in nominal diameter, all injection lines, and gas lines with a pressure greater than 125 pounds per square inch must be buried and constructed of steel. The use of plastic pipe will be approved by the authorized officer on a case-by-case basis. A waiver of the requirement to bury pipelines will be considered in the following situations:
 - The temporary (one year or less) surface installation of plastic pipelines, after considering the length of the pipeline, its proposed location, the potential hazards present, the characteristics of the pipe regarding deterioration, the American Society for Testing and Materials or similar specifications for the pipe, the intended use of the pipeline, and other appropriate factors
 - Where rock outcrops at the surface make the burial of pipeline impractical, such as when unreasonable and unreclaimable surface disturbance would result. Where the pipeline is exposed, painting may be required in accordance with the painting policy for visual resource management areas and Notice to Lessees 87-1, New Mexico. Waiver of the requirement for painting will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Where the surface ownership along the pipeline route is mixed, and the majority of surface ownership is not public. In those cases, the installation of pipelines on public land will conform to the practice to be employed on the remainder of the pipeline, unless special resource management concerns dictate strict adherence to this policy.
- 8) Minimize noise in sensitive wildlife habitats. Consider using noise reduction mufflers, earthen berms, walls, sheds, and/or distance to reduce sound levels.
- 9) All production related pits and tanks, regardless of size, would be covered and fenced to exclude wildlife.

Preliminary Investigations

Activities occurring during preliminary investigations may include remote sensing; mapping of rock outcrops and seeps (either of which result in little or no surface disturbance); and seismic, gravity, and magnetic surveys.

A lease is not required to conduct such preliminary investigations. However, the geophysical operator is required to file a completed Form 3150-4, "Notice of Intent to Conduct Oil and Gas Exploration Operations for all operations on public lands.

In general, the BLM requires an examination of resource values and development of appropriate surface protection and reclamation measures prior to the geophysical contractor beginning surface-disturbing activities associated with preliminary investigations. The BLM will solicit involvement from public land users (e.g., grazing allottees) to develop site-specific protection measures and reclamation specifications. Compliance monitoring should occur during and after seismic exploration activities when or if necessary. Compliance inspections during the operation ensure that requirements and guidelines are being followed. Compliance inspections upon completion of work ensure that the lines are clean and drill holes are plugged properly.

The frequency of authorized seismic exploration will be dependent upon resource conditions and seasonal restrictions (timing limitations) that may be imposed to reduce conflicts with watershed conditions, wildlife, and hunting. Management practices specific to wildlife and vegetation resources include the following:

- Prior to surveying/flagging routes for geophysical surveys or other preliminary activities, the project area shall be surveyed for raptor nests. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer. The Universal Transmencator grid locations of all raptor nests will be reported to the Authorized Officer. All raptor nests will be avoided by the required distances described under the Well Sites section. A "raptor nest" is defined as any raptor or corvid nest.
- In areas that constitute occupied or potential aplomado falcon habitat, a protocol survey for this species will be conducted along with the general raptor nest survey described above, prior to surveying/flagging lines.
- During operations at any time, large (greater than 6 feet in height) trees or shrubs containing or capable of containing a raptor nest will be avoided by vehicular traffic or other activities likely to destroy them.
- In areas that allow for off-road travel, minimize the off-road impact of large vehicles. Use wide, flat-tread, balloon tires (especially on seismic thumper trucks) where possible. Use all-terrain vehicles rather than large vehicles where possible.
- Occupied habitat for special status species will be avoided in a manner similar to surface use requirements (avoid occupied habitat up to 0.5 mile) unless impacts adequately mitigated.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 1) All renewable wind energy projects will be subject to the BMP's identified in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States, U.S. Department of Interior, BLM, June 2005.

BMP's are identified in Section 2.2.3.2 of this document, which can be viewed online at <http://www.windeis.anl.gov/>.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND UTILITY CORRIDORS

- 1) Rights-of-way and utility corridors should use areas adjoining or adjacent to previously disturbed areas whenever possible, rather than traverse undisturbed vegetation communities.
- 2) Waterbars or dikes should be constructed on all of the rights-of-way and utility corridors, and across the full width of the disturbed area, as directed by the authorized officer.
- 3) Disturbed areas within road rights-of-way and utility corridors should be stabilized by vegetation practices designed to hold soil in place and minimize erosion.
- 4) Sediment barriers should be constructed when needed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent transport from the site. Straining or filtration mechanisms may also be employed for the removal of sediment from runoff.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

- 1) Design harvest units and forest health treatments to blend with natural terrain.
- 2) Utilize silvicultural regeneration systems that are most appropriate for treatment objectives. Utilize uneven-aged silviculture for most treatments; however, even-aged systems may be appropriate in situations to accomplish insect and disease control, aspen regeneration, or other site-specific objectives. Consider a range of maximum stand density index by species to accomplish forest health goals.
- 3) When soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of 3 inches, BLM-authorized activities, such as log yarding and hauling, should be limited or cease unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer.
- 4) Scatter unmerchantable material (tops, limbs, etc.) in cutting units and treatment areas, consistent with fuel loading limitations.
- 5) Locate skid trails on upper slope positions, as far as possible from surface water. Avoid skidding across drainage bottoms or creating conditions that concentrate and channelize surface flow.
- 6) Use directional felling, when applicable, to minimize skidding distance and locate skid trails as far as possible from sensitive areas.
- 7) Install waterbars and apply native seed, when available, to skid trails and landings prior to temporary seasonal closures and following harvest operations. Consider ripping or subsoiling on skid trails and abandoned haul roads to reduce compaction where soil and slope conditions permit.
- 8) Locate landings away from surface water. Design landings to minimize disturbance consistent with safety and efficiency of operation.
- 9) Use low pressure grapple equipment, if possible, when piling slash.

- 10) Conduct forested land treatments when soil surfaces are either frozen, dry, or have adequate snowpack to minimize impacts to soil and water resources.
- 11) Prepare pre-harvest plan for efficient forest and site harvesting and road systems. Use topographic maps, aerial photographs, soil surveys, and field trips to determine site conditions. Use global positioning system to geolocate field data for incorporation into the geographic information system. Plan should clearly outline BMPs to be followed before, during, and after harvest; identify area to be harvested; locate special areas of protection (wetlands and streamside vegetation); allow for proper timing of activities; describe management measures for road layout, design, construction, maintenance, harvesting methods, and forest regeneration. As part of plan:
 - Consider natural drainage channels; threatened, endangered, and special status species habitat; topography; and soil types in determining boundaries of timber harvest activities, location and design of roads and landings, selection of harvesting method, reforestation techniques.
 - Avoid sensitive areas such as wetlands and important wildlife habitats. If avoidance is not possible, choose harvest practices with least serious effects or schedule to avoid areas during critical time periods (e.g., nesting or breeding seasons). Where access to adjacent land would allow for more efficient road system or avoidance, consider working with landowner to obtain an easement.
 - Time construction and harvest activities to take advantage of seasonal conditions. When possible, avoid construction during heavy rains or freeze/thaw conditions to avoid potential for runoff and erosion.
- 12) Conduct rapid revegetation of areas disturbed by harvesting operations or road construction to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Equipment and site preparation methods must consider site topography, soil type, natural drainage, amount of rainfall, and kind of vegetation. Site preparation may include:
 - Removal of logging roads, landings, and drainage structures.
 - Mechanical activities to chop, root rake, disk and blade the soil in the disturbed areas in preparation for planting.
 - Prescribed fires to reduce logging residue and undesirable trees and vegetation.
- 13) Establish vegetative cover planting on erodible areas that were cultivated in the fall but will not be planted until spring.
- 14) Stabilize steep slopes prior to planting.
- 15) Use native grasses or other plant species to reseed bare-erodible areas; do not introduce invasive non-native plants under any circumstance.
- 16) Windrow logging debris along contours, in gullies, and on skid trails to stabilize these areas.
- 17) Remove unneeded logging roads and skid trails immediately. Do not wait for entire harvest operation to be completed.

- 18) Smooth, grade and revegetate landings and, where appropriate, main haul roads.
- 19) Remove temporary drainage structures and clean permanent drainage structures.
- 20) Minimize the use and maximize the benefit of chemicals through skilled and appropriate management and application. To ensure safe use of chemicals, consider the following:
 - Transportation, handling, storage, application and disposal of pesticides, fire retardants, and fertilizers must comply with applicable local, state and federal regulations.
 - Monitor weather conditions such as rain, wind speed, temperature and humidity during application to prevent drift, volatilization, and surface water runoff.
 - Do not apply chemicals in streamside management zones or wetlands.
 - Note that fertilizers and fire retardants contain high amounts of both nitrogen and phosphorus and are easily transported overland and deposited in stream along with the sediment. These compounds can accelerate eutrophication (a process whereby water bodies are choked by overabundant plant life and algae due to higher levels of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus).

FOREST WETLANDS

- 1) Establish and maintain a streamside management zone (SMZ) along surface waters to buffer against detrimental changes in the temperature regime of the waterbody, provide bank stability, provide a filter to keep sediment and pollutants out of the stream, and withstand wind damage. The SMZ should be sufficiently wide, and should include a sufficient number of canopy species. The width should be based on erosiveness of the soil, steepness of bank slopes, proximity to municipal watersheds, protection of adjacent wetlands, and sensitivity of fish and wildlife habitat and other critical areas. The SMZ should incorporate nearby wetlands.
- 2) Limit disturbances in SMZs by the following methods: restrict road construction except at designated stream or wetland crossings; operate vehicles only on roads; do not deposit road construction material, waste timber, or slash into SMZs; do not handle, store, apply, or dispose of hazardous chemicals, fertilizers, or pesticides in SMZs. Timber harvesting should be conducted only selectively if at all, and should consider following practices:
 - Retain the appropriate diversity and size of tree and shrub species.
 - Protect and retain trees and shrubs and snags that are below harvest quality.
 - Retain bank edge trees for stream channel stability and to shade stream.
 - Maintain sufficient ground cover to trap sediment.
 - Immediately remove any logging debris that enters the stream channel.
- 3) Use ultrawide, high-flotation tires on logging trucks and skidders to reduce soil compaction and erosion.
- 4) Suspend or limit forest operations when soils become saturated.

- 5) Maintain natural contour of the site and take action to ensure that forestry activities do not immediately or gradually convert the wetland to dry land.
- 6) Where roads are constructed, provide cross drainage to maintain natural surface and subsurface flow.
- 7) Construct road fills only when absolutely necessary. Use gravel or crushed rock as fill to provide for water movement.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

- 1) Minimize surface disturbances and avoid the use of heavy earth-moving equipment where possible, on all fire suppression and rehabilitation activities, including mop-up, except where high value resources (including lives and property), are being protected.
- 2) Install waterbars and seed all constructed firelines with native or adapted nonnative species as appropriate and in accordance with the BLM Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Handbook (BLM 1999c).
- 3) Avoid dropping fire retardant detrimental to aquatic communities on streams, lakes, ponds and in riparian/wetland areas.
- 4) The location and construction of handlines should result in minimal surface disturbance while effectively controlling the fire. Hand crews should locate lines to take full advantage of existing land features that represent natural fire barriers. Whenever possible, handlines should follow the contour of the slope to protect the soil, provide sufficient residual vegetation to capture and retain sediment, and maintain site productivity.
- 5) Suppression in riparian areas should be by hand crews when possible.

PRESCRIBED BURNING

- 1) To protect soil productivity, burning should be conducted, if possible, under conditions when a low intensity burn can accomplish stated objectives. Burn only when conditions of organic surface or duff layer have adequate moisture to minimize effects to the physical and chemical properties of the soil. When possible, maximize the retention of the organic surface or duff layer.
- 2) Slash should not be piled and burned within riparian/wetland areas. If riparian/wetland areas are within or adjacent to the prescribed burn unit, piles should be firelined or scattered prior to burning.
- 3) When preparing the unit for burning, avoid piling concentrations of large logs and stumps; pile small material (3 to 8 inches diameter). Slash piles should be burned when soil and duff moisture are adequate to reduce potential damage to soil resources.
- 4) All fire management activities will be subject to the BMP's identified in the Decision Record and Resource Management Plan Amendment for Fire and Fuels Management on Public Land in New Mexico and Texas, U.S. Department of Interior, BLM New Mexico State Office, September 2004c. BMPs are identified in Chapter 2 of this document, which can be viewed online at <http://www.nm.blm.gov>.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

All rangeland projects and vegetative land treatments will meet current BLM policy and objectives of this Resource Management Plan. Rangeland improvements projects and vegetative treatments are constructed as a portion of adaptive management to reduce resource conflicts and to achieve multiple use objectives. They have been standardized over time to mitigate impacts and will be adhered to in the construction and maintenance of rangeland projects within the planning area. Rangeland improvements are structures, facilities and practices to improve or facilitate the grazing management and improve the resources. Grazing Management Practices are developed through consultation on an allotment specific objectives and progress toward multiple use objectives and sustainability of resources. Grazing Management Practices may include herding, grazing and deferment periods, use of supplement, change of class of livestock and increase or decrease of livestock numbers.

MINING

- 1) Reclaim all disturbed surface areas promptly, performing concurrent reclamation as necessary, and minimize the total amount of all surface disturbance.
- 2) All surface soil should be stripped prior to conducting operations, stockpiled, and reapplied during reclamation, regardless of soil quality. Minimize the length of time soil remains in stockpiles and the depth or thickness of stockpiles. When slopes on topsoil stockpiles exceed 5 percent, a berm or trench should be constructed below the stockpile to prevent sediment transport offsite.
- 3) Strip and separate soil surface horizons where feasible and reapply in proper sequence during reclamation.
- 4) Locate soil stockpiles and waste rock disposal areas away from surface water to minimize off-site drainage effects.
- 5) Establish vegetation cover on soil stockpiles that are to be in place longer than 1 year.
- 6) Construct and rehabilitate temporary roads to minimize total surface disturbance, consistent with intended use.
- 7) Consider temporary measures such as silt fences, straw bales, or mulching to trap sediment in sensitive areas until reclaimed areas are stabilized with vegetation.
- 8) Reshape to the approximate original contour all areas to be permanently reclaimed, providing for proper surface drainage.
- 9) Leave reclaimed surfaces in a roughened condition following soil application.
- 10) Complete reclamation and seeding during the fall if possible.

INVASIVE/NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

- 1) All surface disturbing equipment should be inspected and cleaned prior to coming onto public lands. This is especially important on vehicles from out of state or if coming from a weed infested area.

- 2) If fill dirt or gravel is brought onto public lands, the source needs to be noxious weed free.
- 3) Construction sites should be monitored for the life of the project for the presence of Invasive/Noxious weeds (includes maintenance and construction activities). If weeds are found the Socorro Field Office will be notified and it will determine the best method for the control of the particular weed species.
- 4) All seed shall be certified noxious weed free. Arcas will be monitored to determine the success of re-vegetation, the presents of invasive/noxious weeds, and will be reseeded if necessary.
- 5) Consider livestock quarantine, removal, or timing limitations in invasive/noxious weed-infested areas.
- 6) All seed, hay, straw, mulch, or other vegetation material transported and used on public land for site stability, rehabilitation, or project facilitation shall be certified noxious weed free of all reproductive parts upon the passage of a weed free law in the state of New Mexico. All baled feed, pelletized feed, and grain used to feed livestock shall also be certified as free of noxious weed seed.
- 7) It is recommended that all vehicles, including off-road and all-terrain, traveling in or out of weed-infested areas should clean their equipment before and after use on public land.

DEVELOPED RECREATION

- 1) Construct recreation sites and provide appropriate sanitation facilities to minimize impacts to resource values, public health and safety, and minimize user conflicts of approved activities and access within an area as appropriate.
- 2) Minimize impacts to resource values or to enhance a recreational setting and recreation experience. Harden sites and locations subject to prolonged/repetitive concentrated recreational uses with selective placement of gravel or other porous materials and allow for dust abatement, paving, and engineered road construction.
- 3) Use public education and/or physical barriers (such as rocks, posts, vegetation) to direct or preclude uses and to minimize impacts to resource values and the quality of recreation experience.
- 4) As appropriate, employ limitations of specific activities to avoid or correct adverse impacts to resource values, public safety issues, and/or conflicts between recreational uses.
- 5) Employ land use ethics programs and techniques such as "Leave No Trace" and "Tread Lightly" programs. Use outreach efforts of such programs to lessen needs to implement more stringent regulatory measures to obtain resource protection and a quality recreation experience.

WILDLIFE AND RIPARIAN HABITAT

- 1) Prior to the initiation of a surface-disturbing activity, the project area will be surveyed for raptor nests or active prairie dog towns. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer. All raptor nests and active prairie dog towns will be avoided by the distances and seasonal periods listed below.

- Eagle – 0.5 mile, February 1-July 15
- Prairie Falcon – 0.5 mile, March 1-August 1
- Ferruginous Hawk – 0.5 mile, February 1-July 15
- Aplomado Falcon – 0.5 mile, January 1-July 31
- Gunnison Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile, February 15-June 15
- Black-Tailed Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile, January 1-June 15
- All other raptor species – 0.25 mile, during observed nest establishment through fledgling

Long duration land use activities will not be allowed to occur within the species-specific spatial buffer zone of active nests or occupied prairie dog towns listed above. Short duration activities will be avoided within the species-specific spatial buffer zones during the dates listed above. Short duration activities will be limited to the spatial buffer zone outside of the boundary of the occupied prairie dog town and will not occur within the occupied town. All other raptor species nests will be avoided by the spatial buffer zone only during the period listed above, regardless of the duration of the activity. Before land use activities can commence a raptor and prairie dog survey must be completed.

A short duration activity is defined as an activity, which would begin outside of a given breeding season and end prior to initiation of a given breeding season. A long duration activity is defined as an activity which would continue into or beyond a given nesting/breeding season. An active nest is defined as any nest that has been occupied in the last seven years. A nest will be determined active or inactive by the Authorized Officer. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer.

- 2) Ensure that all fences are constructed to BLM Socorro Field Office Fence Specifications to mitigate impacts to wildlife.
- 3) Ensure that escape wildlife escape ramps are installed and maintained on all applicable water development projects on public lands (see BLM Manual Handbook H-1741-2 Water Developments November 6, 1990).
- 4) Construct all new water improvements so that they are located a minimum of 30 meters away from fences or other structures likely to pose a collision threat to bats.
- 5) Surface disturbance will not be allowed within up to 0.5 mile of the outer edge of 100-year floodplains, playas, all artificial water developments (tanks, guzzlers, etc.), and riparian habitat (seeps, arroyos, etc.). Exceptions to this requirement will be considered on a case-by case basis.
- 6) In areas where habitat and/or rangeland enhancement projects have been implemented, with the exception of large landscape projects (prescribed burns, chemical treatments, and mechanical treatments), adverse impacts to the landscape will be avoided by minimizing or excluding certain surface-disturbing activities that may degrade the objectives or intent of the project. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 7) In all crucial calving, lambing, kidding, and fawning areas and wintering ranges, all surface-disturbing activities, permanent or temporary, will be avoided during the appropriate time periods.

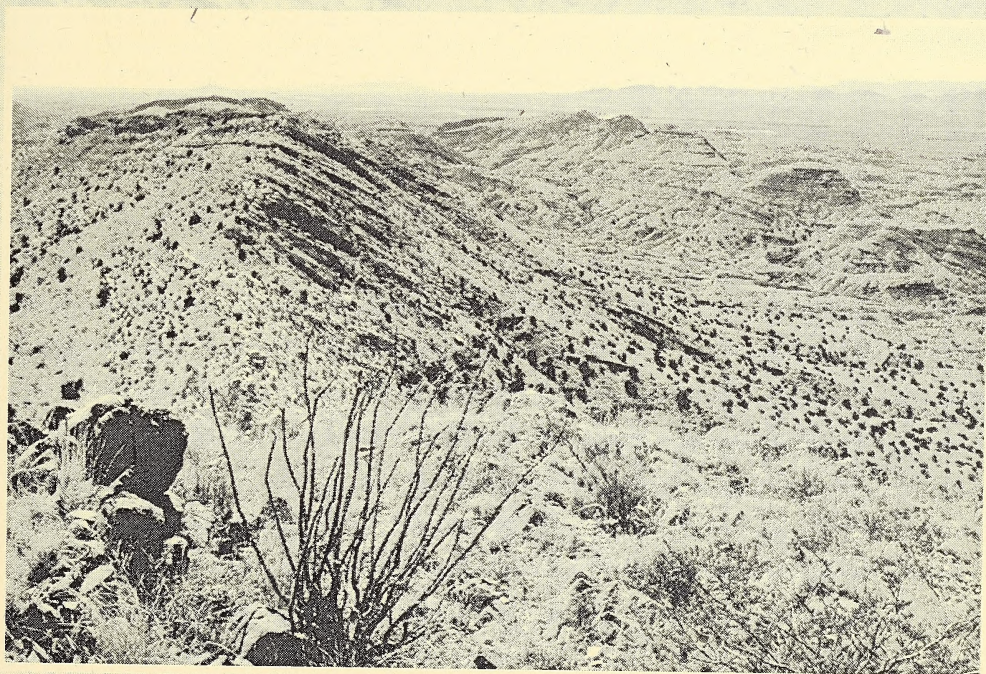
- 8) Prior to initiating geophysical or other preliminary surveys during the raptor breeding season, the area will be surveyed for the presence of raptor nests.
- 9) In siting facilities, the following measures must be followed:
- In areas that constitute occupied or potential aplomado falcon habitat, a protocol survey for this species will be conducted along with the above general raptor nest survey prior to surveying/flagging locations.
 - During operations at any time, all habitat features (pinnacles, cliffs, ledges, caves, and trees and shrubs greater than 6 feet in height) containing or capable of containing raptor nests or bat habitat will be avoided by vehicular traffic or other surface-disturbing activities likely to remove or destroy them unless authorized by BLM authorized officer.
 - Tree and vegetation clearing will be limited to the minimum area required.
 - Construction activities will be timed to avoid wet periods.
 - Power lines will be constructed to standards outlined in the most recent version of "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines" published by the Edison Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation, unless otherwise agreed to by the Authorized Officer. The holder is responsible for demonstrating that power pole designs not meeting these standards are raptor safe. Such proof will be provided by a raptor expert approved by the Authorized Officer. The BLM reserves the right to require modifications or additions to power line structures constructed under this authorization, should they be necessary to ensure the safety of large perching birds. The modifications and/or additions will be made by the holder without liability or expense to the United States.
 - All equipment installed on Federal lands will be constructed to prevent birds and bats from entering them and, to the extent practical, to discourage perching and nesting.
 - Open top tanks, reserve pits, disposal pits, or other open pits will be required to be equipped to deter entry by birds, bats, or other wildlife.

VISUAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

BMPs to address visual resource concerns have been incorporated into the above resource discussions, as appropriate. Additional BMPs dealing with visual resource management considerations in oil and gas development can be found on the BLM website at www.blm.gov/bmp/. BMPs dealing with visual resource management considerations in general are available at www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/destech.

Appendix D

Monitoring



APPENDIX D MONITORING

Effectiveness monitoring is the process of collecting data and information in order to determine whether or not desired outcomes (expressed as goals and objectives in the land use plan) are being met (or progress is being made toward meeting them) as the allowable uses and management actions are being implemented. This appendix describes the process for effectiveness monitoring that would be carried out for each resource or program to determine if the actions described in the Resource Management Plan Revision are meeting or moving toward management goals.

VEGETATION

Monitoring to determine success in meeting vegetation management objectives would include periodic measurements of plant composition, vigor, and productivity, as well as measurement of the amount and distribution of plant cover and litter which protects the soil surface from raindrop impact, detains overland flow, protects the surface from wind erosion, and retards soils moisture loss through evaporation. Additional data to determine the effectiveness of established tools in meeting objectives may include herbaceous or woody utilization, actual use, and climatic conditions.

Determination of trends in production, structure, composition of vegetation and determination of soil/site stability, watershed function, and integrity of biotic community would be done through the rangeland health assessment process prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (Shaver et al. 2000), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards (BLM 2001).

Special Status Plants

Monitoring would include surveys to determine the distribution, resource conditions, and trends of special status plant species and representative habitats. This would include determining plant composition at the site, checking for invasion of exotic species, monitoring localized disturbances (from off-highway vehicle [OHV] use, recreational use, etc.), and determining trends in special status plant attributes. Monitoring methods would include establishing photo points and doing periodic ocular surveillance. Any new ground-disturbing activities or National Environmental Policy Act actions would require a survey clearance for presence or absence of special status plants. Trends in special status plants and vegetation would be determined and could include such things as demographic studies, density, cover, and frequency (in enclosures versus open areas). Methods to accomplish this could include establishing new enclosures to determine effects of use versus nonuse, developing conservation agreements/conservation strategies, and conducting vegetative attribute sampling in accordance with Measuring and Monitoring Plant Populations (Elzinga et al. 1998).

Invasive/Noxious Weeds

Evaluation of treatments would continue in cooperation with the State of New Mexico, Socorro and Catron Counties, and private interests as well as neighboring counties and Federal jurisdictions. Inventories to identify new introductions, distribution, and density of noxious weed populations would be carried out on an annual basis in cooperation with the aforementioned entities. Known noxious weed sites, which are identified for treatment, will be visited each year and evaluated for effectiveness of control. Known sites not identified for treatment will be visited on a rotational basis over three years. All known sites visited will be located with a global positioning system (GPS) unit, photographed, measured, and a determination of the need for future treatment will be made.

Inventories for new noxious weeds will be conducted each year on a three-year rotation through the resource area. All burned areas (natural and prescribed) will be surveyed for noxious weeds for three years following the burn. Any newly discovered sites will be located with a GPS unit, photographed, measured, and a determination of the need for future treatment will be made. Ecological trends due to changes in vegetation composition over time, in areas dominated by competing undesirable plant species, would be measured through periodic rangeland health assessments following procedures outlined in *Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health* (Shaver et al. 2000).

RANGELAND

Monitoring studies have been established on all allotments in BLM's Decision Area. Data such as actual livestock use, utilization of forage species, climatic data, rangeland condition, and trend would continue to be collected from these studies. The intensity and frequency of monitoring data collection would vary by management category. Allotments in the "I" category are monitored at a greater intensity than the allotments in categories "M" and "C." The monitoring schedule will be dependant on staffing and budget.

The frequency of evaluations will likewise vary due to staffing and budget. At a minimum, evaluations should be coordinated with the renewal schedule of the 10-year permit. Where allotment management plans are in place, the evaluation would coincide with the end grazing cycle. Since 1999, 129 allotments have been evaluated as a result of the permit renewal process.

WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Monitoring of wildlife enhancement projects will be implemented annually or semiannually as time, funding, and availability of personnel allows. Data will be used to help determine areas where habitat is limited and where special management may be needed. Where vegetation treatments are applied, annually or semiannually monitor results with photo points and vegetation sampling that includes species and structural composition of the sites both pre-and post-treatment, if possible. Baseline big game and non-game use patterns and estimated population levels would be calculated using information collected annually from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. These would be compared with post-treatment use patterns and population numbers, along with vegetation sampling, and would be used to determine the relative effectiveness of the treatment. This monitoring would be accomplished by contract or with the aid of Federal, State, and private employees. Every five years or as time, funding, and availability of personnel allows, the number of acres of bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope habitat that has undergone vegetation treatments would be evaluated to determine what percentage of the proposed treatment has been completed. In addition, every five years, population levels and distribution of these species within the resource area would be evaluated using annual observations and herd counts conducted by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Monitoring could consist of intensive research projects or passive population inventories designed to help identify the extent of the populations and the habitats that are being used. Inventories of special status species would be completed once every one to three years for species known to occur within the Decision Area.

Annually or semi-annually assess landscape changes in a variety of vegetative communities from wildfire, prescribed fire, vegetation treatments, insect infestation, or other major influences. These changes will be mapped using GPS, geographic information system, and remote sensing technologies. The number of acres will be reported for each type of action. Assessments will be based on changes in the size and composition of each major vegetative community. Changes will reflect suitability for dependent/obligate species for each vegetative community. Each vegetative community would be evaluated periodically during Rangeland Health Assessments and after major catastrophic events such as large-scale wildfires.

Where necessary, recommendations will be made for protection and restoration of damaged or degraded habitats.

Riparian Habitat

The goal of the Socorro Field Office riparian monitoring is to document the progress toward achieving and then maintaining Proper Functioning Condition while being managed under the multiple use and adaptive management concepts. Riparian and wetland areas are considered to be functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris are present to dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality. The process used to assess Proper Functioning Condition is described in BLM Technical References 1737-9 and 1737-15. Proper Functioning Condition is reassessed on a three-year rotating basis. A binder containing monitoring information, such as Proper Functioning Condition results, reassessment schedules, and photo-point monitoring photos, for each designated riparian reach is being compiled and maintained in the Socorro Field Office.

Although the BLM standard is to use proper functioning condition assessments, trend assessments can quickly provide initial information about progress toward desired conditions. Trend assessments include the following: wildlife and aquatic monitoring, water quality monitoring, Rosgen channel typing, riparian site classification, assessment of change over time towards meeting desired range of conditions, low-level aerial photography, and remote-sensing technologies. Riparian areas also are required to meet the riparian standard of the New Mexico Standards and Guidelines (see Appendix E).

Attainment of Proper Functioning Condition (BLM 1993, 1998) objectives is considered a minimum step in the process of achieving desired range of conditions. Proper Functioning Condition and other riparian objectives in most cases do not equate to the desired range of conditions. Determination of Proper Functioning Condition and riparian management objectives is an interdisciplinary process. To determine improvement in conditions relating to lotic proper functioning condition, monitoring methods are described for all assessment categories in BLM Technical Reference 1737-15 (1998).

Photo Points and Aerial Photos – Photo points are established during Proper Functioning Condition assessments. Photo sets taken at specific repeatable locations subjectively show changes in stream channels and vegetation over time. Photo points can be very useful to illustrate changes at specific points over time. Aerial photos show changes in channel and vegetation over the length of a stream. They include enough detail to monitor woody species changes over time.

Wild Horses

A monitoring plan will be developed to measure the achievement or nonachievement of objectives. Routine monitoring within the Herd Management Area would be conducted on habitat and wild horses at a minimum of once every three years or prior to the next gather. Monitoring of habitat may consist of utilization of key forage species, trend of vegetation, precipitation, and water availability.

Various types of census methods may be used to determine the number and distribution of wild horses. Census methods recommended by the National Academy of Science Committee on Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros will be used to determine population size.

Data used to assess herd condition and health will be collected during the census, when conducting gathers, or from routine observations. This can include age and sex structure of the herd, lactation and pregnancy, distribution, band size, color, height, physical condition, and behavior. At times, blood samples may be drawn from horses to test genetic diversity.

FORESTRY AND WOODLAND

The forestry program will be monitored prior to and following silvicultural treatments utilizing standard forest stand exams to determine forest or woodland species, trees per acre, size classes, and overall forest or woodland health. Permanent plots will be established, including photo points. Line transects will also be utilized to determine cover and composition changes over time. These plots will be read on a schedule that reflects condition of the site and goals for future desired condition of the vegetation.

The vegetative sales program would be monitored prior to and following establishment of vegetative sales collection sites using permanent plots established for photo points. These plots will be read on a schedule that reflects condition of the site, to ensure no undue resource damage has occurred from harvesting plant materials.

For both the forestry and vegetative sales programs, regular site visits throughout the year would be a part of the monitoring program to ensure signs are in place, the public is properly permitted, and the public is not entering areas under wet conditions.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Monitoring would occur on an ongoing annual basis and would include periodic patrols to check boundaries of recreation areas and signing; ensure visitor compliance with rules and regulations; establish baseline data, as needed; determine current impacts from recreational use; and record data to help determine appropriate levels and patterns of recreational use and the influences of other resource uses. Monitoring would focus on visitation levels; compliance with rules, regulations, and permit stipulations for developed sites; dispersed uses; permits; and prescribed standards and guidelines as set forth in planning documents and the recreation opportunity spectrum classes. Methods of monitoring could include one or more of the following: traffic counters; surveillance at developed sites; limits of acceptable change studies, as needed; user contacts; monitoring of permitted events; and photo documentation of changes in resource condition over time. These data would be used to manage visitor use, develop plans and projects to reduce visitor impacts, and meet visitor expectations and demands. The level of monitoring would be contingent on available funding.

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS – OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES

Overall monitoring and evaluation of the Socorro Field Office's Transportation System would be reviewed and updated as needed.

Monitoring OHV uses within the Planning Area would be ongoing with a focus on compliance with specific designations, as well as determining whether these uses are in compliance and/or causing adverse effects on various resources. Methods of monitoring would include visitor contacts, permit review, visual surveillance, traffic counters, periodic patrols to check area boundaries and routes, signing, and visitor use. Aerial reconnaissance and use of satellite imagery could be used as well. Closures would be monitored to ensure public safety and protect affected roadbeds or areas. Baseline data would be established for sites where OHV use is occurring, and sites would be rehabilitated or closed as necessary, contingent on available funding.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Monitoring would be ongoing for all projects (including but not limited to projects associated with any developments, land alterations, vegetation manipulation, etc.), which could potentially affect visual resources. These projects would be monitored to ensure compliance with established visual resource

management classes. Monitoring would include use of the visual contrast rating system, described in BLM Manual 8400 (BLM 1984), where appropriate, during project review.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

There are two kinds of cultural resource site monitoring: one consists of field examination to assess whether any impacts have occurred resulting from Section 106 undertakings, and the other is to assess any natural or human-caused impacts that are not related to authorized Federal undertakings.

Section 106 monitoring will be conducted when deemed appropriate by the Resource Area archaeologist or the Socorro Field Office Manager (i.e., when project design constraints do not allow for standard buffers for site avoidance).

Non-Section 106 monitoring of BLM-administered cultural resources in the Socorro Field Office area of jurisdiction will be conducted as staffing levels and workload permit, with a minimum of 10 site visits per year. Sites for non-Section 106 monitoring will be prioritized as follows:

1. National Register eligible sites reported to be undergoing effects from natural or human caused phenomena.
2. Sites of outstanding significance, particularly if they are considered vulnerable or at-risk such as sites in areas of intense recreation use and sites in urban interface areas.
3. Sites chosen based on accessibility to staff or volunteers. For example, sites near a current project area.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Wilderness Study Areas

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) would be managed under the Interim Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM 1995). The interim management policy requires monitoring of all WSAs on a regular basis to ensure wilderness characteristics are maintained. Monitoring levels could vary by WSA depending on use, access, conflicts, and other considerations. Monitoring boundaries and OHV area and route designations is a priority action during patrols of WSAs. Methods of monitoring could be both motorized along WSA boundaries and open routes, and non-motorized. Aerial surveillance, visitor contact, and permit compliance also would be used as part of monitoring. Projects or uses allowed under the interim management policy also would be closely monitored to ensure compliance and protection of wilderness characteristics. WSAs also would be monitored to ensure any unauthorized activities are documented and rehabilitated as needed.

Special Designations Management

All the special designations including areas of critical environmental concern, special recreation management areas, and special management areas would be assessed on a periodic schedule in order to evaluate maintenance and enhancement of relevant and important values, in the case of areas of critical environmental concern, and the other values for which other areas were designated for special management. All areas also would be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of management in maintaining those values. Monitoring may include collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Monitoring methods would be the same or similar to those described above for the various resource management programs.

LAND AND REALTY

All authorized rights-of-way, permits, and leases including recreational and public proposes authorizations will be monitored by both the holder and the Authorized Officer. The holder will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of the grant and 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2805.12 to ensure that public health, safety, and welfare are protected, and that the right-of-way, permit, or lease is in accordance with the State and local laws and that the terms and conditions of the authorization are being followed. The monitoring may involve but not be limited to conducting repetitive inspections, data gathering, or technical investigation. The frequency and type will depend on the resource values at risk, the holder's past performance record, and the ability to obtain monitoring services.

The Authorized Officer will periodically conduct inspections of the area to ensure the protection of resources and that the management objectives in the land use plan are being met. These inspections will also confirm the holder is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the authorization, rental fees are being properly calculated, and the protection of the public health and safety is not being jeopardized. The Authorized Officer may conduct joint inspections with the holder. Written documentation of the inspections will be file in the casefile.

Prior to surface-disturbing activities, the Authorized Office may require the holder not to proceed until the Authorized Officer has issued written notice to proceed. The Authorized Officer may conduct inspections during construction. The frequency and type of inspection will be depend on the resource values at risk, type of activities involved with the authorization, and the holder's previous performance record.

Each Recreation and Public Purpose Act lease and patent will periodically receive an examination as to the terms, plan of development, timetable for construction plan of management, etc., in order to comply with the law. According to the BLM Handbook H-2740-1 Chapter 8, compliance checks should be scheduled at a minimum at intervals of five years after a lease or patent has been issued. Additional checks may be required in circumstances where the plan of development shows completion or substantial development of the proposed project in less than five years, the lease specifies a nonuse period shorter than five years, or receipt of a complaint alleging lands are being used for a purpose not authorized in the lease or patent. The compliance checks may be conducted by the holder, a third-party contractor, or other regulatory entity.

SOILS

Manage uses to minimize and mitigate disturbances to soils and loss of soil sediments from erosion. Maintain soil stability to protect soil ecological health and long-term productivity.

Soil health will be monitored through the use of the Rangeland Standards assessments that assess vegetative and soil conditions. The schedule of monitoring varies for allotment evaluations. These evaluations monitor utilization, vegetative trends, and ground cover. Specific localized soil erosion areas will be evaluated for rehabilitation efforts.

WATER RESOURCES

Manage uses to maintain or improve overall watershed health by maximizing infiltration for groundwater recharge. Manage uses to maintain or improve surface water quality in watersheds, and watersheds which affect streams that are listed as water quality limited under the Clean Water Act, Section 303 (d). Manage resources to maintain or reduce salinity loading in accomplishing the goals and objectives outlined in the Colorado River Salinity Control Act.

Watershed health will be monitored through the use of the Rangeland Standards assessments that assess vegetative and soil conditions. The schedule of monitoring varies for allotment evaluations. These evaluations monitor utilization, vegetative trends, and ground cover.

AIR QUALITY

Ensure BLM authorizations and management activities comply with Federal, State, and local air quality regulations, requirements, and implementation plans. Protect ground cover to minimize wind erosion of soils. No specific air monitoring is planned.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Monitoring studies would be encouraged on all emergency fire rehabilitation projects to determine whether emergency fire rehabilitation objectives were met.

Monitoring would be implemented on all projects that employ new techniques, seed mixes, or rehabilitation methods. Emergency fire rehabilitation funds may be used to fund monitoring studies for up to three growing seasons following fire control.

Pre-fire condition and post-fire effects would be determined by monitoring plant community composition and trend in burn areas to determine natural recovery, responses from seed planting, and weed and cheatgrass invasion. Monitoring methods would include establishing photo points, density, cover, frequency plots (pre- and post-burn), and ocular estimates.

MINERALS

Monitoring of activities on mining claims would be conducted to ensure compliance with the 43 CFR 3802/3809 regulations. These regulations provide for locatable mineral activities on public lands while preventing unnecessary or undue degradation, and provide for reclamation of disturbed areas and coordination with State agencies. BLM policy establishes minimum inspection frequencies for mining operations as follows: quarterly inspections are required for all operations using cyanide, and biannual inspections are required for all other active operations. Operations in sensitive areas or operations with a high potential for greater than usual impacts are inspected more often.

For fluid mineral leases, inspections would be conducted to determine compliance with applicable laws, regulations, conditions of leases, and the requirements of approved exploration and development plans. Where mineral production is occurring, inspections would ensure (1) an accurate accounting of materials removed; (2) proper compensation to the Federal government; (3) protection of the environment, public health and safety; and (4) identification and resolution of salable mineral trespass. Operations in sensitive areas or operations with a high potential for greater than usual impacts would be inspected more frequently.

For saleable mineral operations, inspections would be conducted to determine compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the requirements of approved mining plans. Where mineral production is occurring, the goals of the salable mineral inspection and enforcement/production verification program are (1) an accurate accounting of materials removed; (2) proper compensation to the Federal government; (3) protection of the environment, public health and safety; and (4) identification and resolution of salable mineral trespass. Operations in sensitive environmental areas or operations with a high potential for greater than usual impacts would be inspected more often.

CAVES AND KARST RESOURCES

The purpose of a monitoring program for Cave and Karst areas is to facilitate improved management through monitoring and research and to protect natural and scenic values while allowing for recreation, and educational and scientific uses where such use does not conflict with protecting unique values.

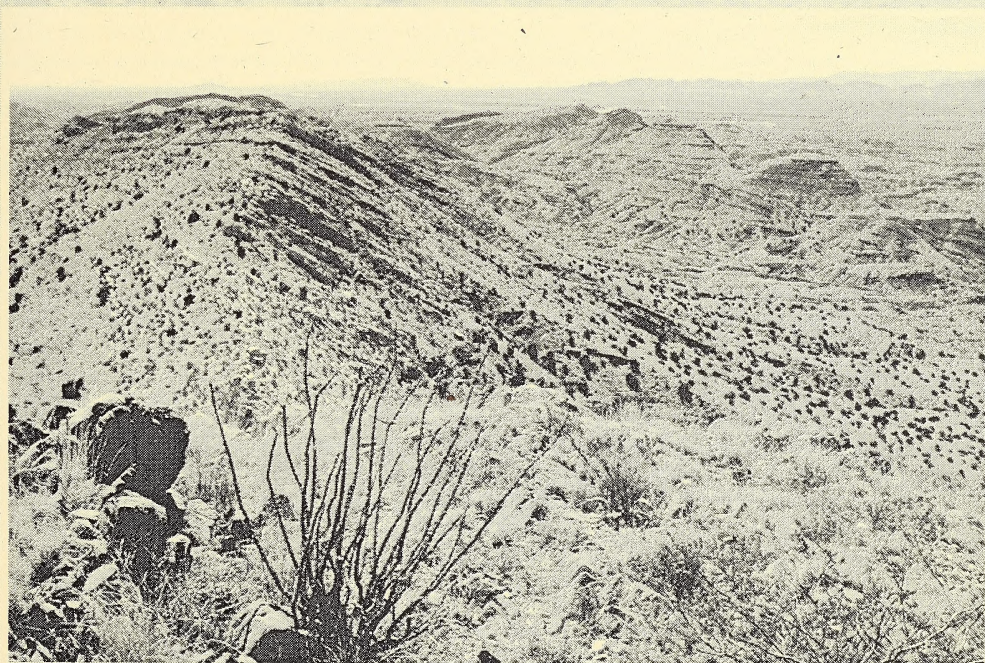
Conduct inventories and long-term general and specific ecological studies relating to the requirements of cave habitats for special status species. Determine population trends, threats, and habitat change by monitoring populations of all special status species using cave or karst habitats. Gather baseline information on habitat use by all species. Establish photo monitoring points and periodically take photos to record any changes. Use Limit of Acceptable Change techniques to monitor impacts from visitor use. Employ visitor surveys to determine visitor use, visitor satisfaction with their experience, and effectiveness of any interpretation or educational programs and facilities. Monitor the effects of any constructed projects or developments on wildlife and habitat use.

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Appendix E

Recreational Opportunity Spectrum Definitions and Visual Resource Management Class Objectives



APPENDIX E

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM DEFINITIONS AND VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASS OBJECTIVES

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) provides the conceptual framework for inventory, planning, and management of recreation resources. The ROS recognizes that people differ in their needs and the experience they desire. Also, the resource base is not uniform; it varies in its potential for providing recreation experiences. The ROS provides a way to characterize either the capability of a resource to provide an experience or the demand for an experience in terms of the activity opportunity and setting opportunity provided or demanded. Therefore, recreation opportunities can be expressed in terms of three components: (1) the activities, (2) the setting, and (3) the experience. The possible combinations of these three components are arranged along a continuum or spectrum. The ROS is divided into six classes, with each class defined in terms of its combination of activity, setting, and experience opportunities. The six classes are primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, rural, and urban. As conceived, the spectrum has application to all land, regardless of ownership or jurisdiction. Classes are described as follows.

Primitive

This is essentially an unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Use of motorized vehicles is prohibited. There is an extremely high probability of experiencing isolation, closeness to nature, and self-reliance on outdoor skills. Activities may include hiking, nature study, fishing, cross-country skiing, and floatboating.

Semi-primitive Non-motorized

This is a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present. Use of motorized vehicles is prohibited. There is a high probability of experiencing isolation, closeness to nature, and self-reliance in outdoor skills. Activities may include camping, hunting, snowshoeing, and floatboating.

Semi-primitive Motorized

This is a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. User interaction is low, but there is evidence of other users. Minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present. Use of motorized vehicles is permitted. There is a moderate probability of experiencing isolation, closeness to nature, and self-reliance in outdoor skills. Activities may include boating, motor biking, specialized landcraft use, mountain climbing, driving for pleasure, camping, and picnicking.

Roaded Natural

This is a predominantly natural-appearing environment with moderate evidence of humans. Evidence usually harmonizes with the natural environment. Management provides for the use of conventional motorized vehicles. There is an equal probability to experience affiliation with other user groups and for isolation and interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities are not very important, although testing of outdoor skills may be. Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation are available. Activities may include bus touring, water skiing, walking, canoeing, sledding, and driving for pleasure.

Rural

This is a substantially modified environment. Resource modifications and utilization practices are to enhance specific recreation activities. Facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Motorized use and parking opportunities are available. The probability of user interaction is moderate to high, as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. These factors are generally more important than the physical setting. Wildland challenges and testing of outdoor skills are generally unimportant. Activities may include interpretive services, swimming, bicycling, recreation cabin use, and skiing.

Urban

This is a substantially urbanized environment, although the background may have natural-appearing elements. Renewable resource modernization and urbanization practices are to enhance specific recreation opportunities. Vegetative cover is often exotic and manicured. Large numbers of users can be expected on site and in nearby areas. Facilities for highly intensified motor-vehicle use and parking are available. The probability of user interaction is high, as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. Experiencing natural environments and uses of outdoor skills are relatively unimportant. Opportunities for competitive and spectator sports and for passive uses are common. Activities may include resort lodging, ice skating, team sports participation, tour boat use, and picnicking.

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASS OBJECTIVES

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires the Bureau of Land Management to consider the effects of management actions on the visual quality of the landscape. To protect visual resources, all public land is inventoried to determine its Visual Resource Management classification. The Visual Resource Management objectives for each of the four possible classifications are described below.

Class I

The objective of this classification is the *preservation* of the existing landscape's character. Providing for natural ecological changes, this class allows limited management activity. The very low level of change must not attract attention. Class I is assigned to those areas in which management decisions have been made to preserve a natural landscape. Thus, the class includes wilderness study areas and other congressionally and administratively designated areas.

Class II

The *retention* of the existing character of the landscape is the objective of this classification. The level of change to landscape characteristics should be low; management activities may be seen but should not attract the attention of a casual observer. Any alterations must conform to the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III

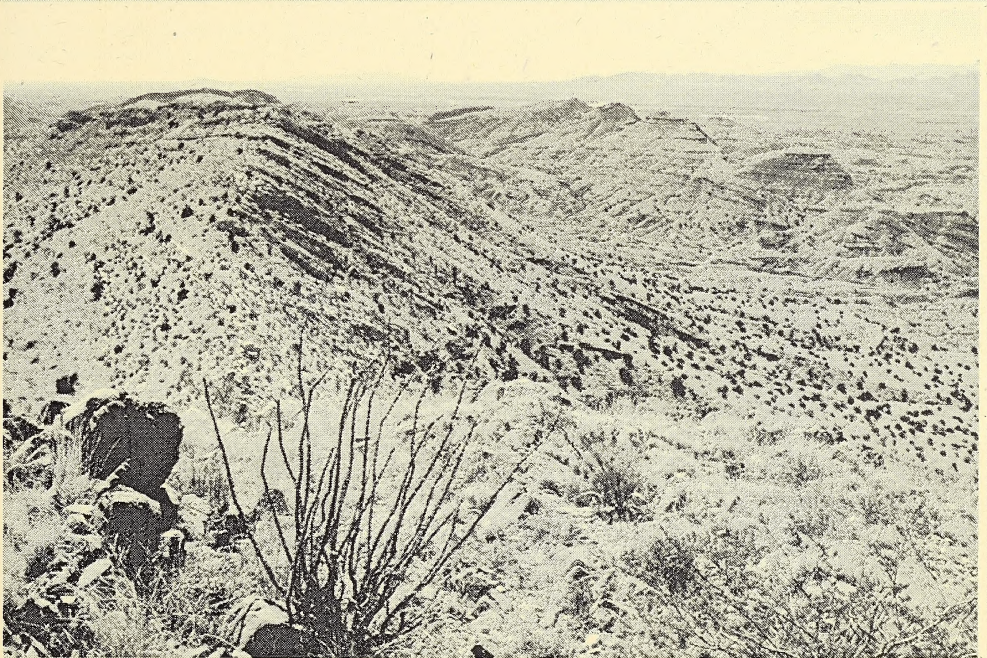
The objective of Class III is the *partial retention* of the existing landscape character. Moderate levels of change are acceptable. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the casual observer's view. Changes should conform to the basic elements of the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class IV

Class IV provides for major landscape *modification* management activities. These management activities may dominate the view and become the focus of viewer attention. Every effort should be made to minimize the impact of these projects by carefully locating activities, minimizing disturbance, and designing the projects to conform to the characteristic landscape.

Appendix F

Land and Minerals Disposal Policy and Plan for Right-of-way Exclusion and Avoidance Areas



APPENDIX F

LAND AND MINERALS DISPOSAL POLICY AND PLAN FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY EXCLUSION AND AVOIDANCE AREAS

SURFACE ESTATE DISPOSAL POLICY

All surface estate disposal actions require the preparation of a mineral report to assess the mineral potential of the property prior to disposal.

Any potential interference with mineral development will be considered through the disposal process. The creation of a split surface-mineral estate causing surface interference with Federal mineral development will be avoided to the extent possible. Any surface disposal action will closely analyze potential impacts to Federal mineral material development. All surface estate patents within areas of known coal potential will carry a reservation of surface owner consent rights under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

The following items will be examined when considering the merits of any disposal:

- Consistency and conformance with current planning
- Consistency with mineral resource policy and fluid mineral leasing procedures
- Potential effects on special status species and their habitat
- Potential effects on recreation and wilderness values
- Potential effects on prime and unique farmland
- Floodplain and flood hazard evaluation
- Potential effects on cultural and paleontological resource values
- Potential effects on American Indian religious values
- Potential effects on visual resources
- Potential effects on ACECs
- Potential effects on wetlands
- Potential effects on existing rights and uses
- Public controversy
- Potential effects on health and safety
- Potential effects on adjacent uses and ownership
- Potential effects on air resources

The following procedures will be followed for the various types of surface estate land disposal actions in the Socorro Field Office Area:

Exchanges

Disposal by exchange must meet the criteria outlined in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) Sec. 206, whereby it is determined that the public interest will be well served by making the proposed exchange. Exchanges within designated retention areas may be possible if it is clearly

determined that it is in the best interest of the public. The following principles will guide the Socorro Field Office in its land exchange program.

1. The Socorro Field Office will continue to strive to process mutually benefiting, public interest land exchanges in a timely and efficient manner.
2. Acquisition through exchange rather than purchase of lands or interests in lands required for resource management programs will always be the preferred method of acquisition, as this will reduce the expansion of Federal real estate holdings and help to assure the integrity of State and local tax basis.
3. Comments from State and local governments and the general public shall be sought and considered before completion of each exchange.
4. Patent and deed reservations and conditions will be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to complete the transaction. Rights of third-party right-of-way holders and other legal interests in the exchanged lands will be protected.
5. The generally preferred rule is for both surface and subsurface (mineral) estates to be traded in an exchange. However, due to third-party encumbrances, or difficulties in the valuation process, it may be preferable to complete certain exchanges with reservations. Such exceptions to the generally preferred rule are to be made on a case-by-case basis.
6. Exchanges shall be utilized to consolidate the surface and subsurface estates for both the Federal government and non-Federal owners in split estate situations.
7. Exchanges may be utilized to affect ownership and management area boundary changes or adjustments and to form more logical and efficient land and resource management areas for both the Federal government and non-Federal owners.
8. As the law permits, expenses incurred by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on exchange actions for the benefit of other Federal agencies shall be recovered from the benefiting agency. The BLM shall not attempt to recover nominal costs.
9. When an exchange involves the cancellation in hold or in part of a grazing permit or lease, the compensation for rangeland improvements and 2-year notification requirements of Section 402(g) of the FLPMA and 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4110 will be met.
10. The acquisition of nonpublic lands containing unique or unusual historic, cultural, mineral, recreational, scientific, and scenic or wildlife habitat values will be pursued when formulating any exchange proposal.

Sales

Property selected for sale must be identified as being potentially suitable for disposal in an approved land use plan and must meet one or more of the criteria outlined in the FLPMA Sec. 203. In addition, if the tract is 2,500 acres or more, procedures outlined in Sec. 203(c) must also be followed. The disposal criteria is as follows:

- Such tract because of its location or other characteristics is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency; or

- Such tract was acquired for a specific purpose, and the tract is no longer needed for that or any other Federal purpose; or
- Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweighs other public objectives and values, including but not limited to recreation and scenic values, which would be served by maintaining such tract in Federal ownership.

Anticipated environmental impacts to existing resources such as minerals, wildlife, recreation, range, cultural resources, wilderness values, floodplains, palaeontological values, visual resources, areas of critical environmental concern, wetlands, threatened or endangered rivers, prime or unique farm lands, and social and economic conditions, will be considered during the preparation of each environmental assessment. The environmental assessment will be used to determine whether the subject parcel is suitable to be offered for sale. Once this determination has been made, a fair market appraisal of the property will be completed to set the minimum acceptable bid.

If a tract is determined suitable for sale, the environmental assessment will analyze the method of sale that will be used to dispose of the tract. Several factors are considered in determining the method of sale which include but are not limited to the needs of State and/or local governments, adjoining landowners' interests and concerns, public policies, historical uses, and equitable distribution of the land. In accordance with 43 CFR 2711.3, the Socorro Field Office policy for determining the sale method is as follows:

1. Competitive bidding is the preferred method of sale and will be used where clearly there will be a number of interested parties bidding for the land and they could make practicable use of the land regardless of adjoining landownership. Competitive bidding will also be used where the land is clearly within a developing or urbanizing area and land values are increasing due to their location and interest on the competitive market. If there are no overriding bases for modifying competition or direct sale, the land will be offered through competitive bidding. The normal practice for competitive sales is to first offer the land for sale by sealed bids; if unsold, the tract is offered for sale over-the-counter.
2. Modified competitive bidding may be used to permit the existing grazing user or adjoining landowner to meet the high bid or to limit the number of persons permitted to bid on the land. These sales will normally be for lands not located near urban expansion areas or in areas with rapidly increasing land values, when there is a need to avoid jeopardizing existing use of adjacent land, to assure compatibility of the possible uses with adjacent lands, and avoid dislocation of existing users. This procedure will allow for limited competitive bidding to protect ongoing use.
3. Direct (without competition) sales may be used when, in the opinion of the Authorized Officer, the public interest would best be served. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - A tract identified for transfer to State or local governments or nonprofit organizations; or
 - A tract identified for sale that is an integral part of a project or of public importance and speculative bidding would jeopardize the timely completion and economic viability of the project; or
 - There is a need to recognize authorized use such as an existing business which would be threatened if the tract were purchased by other than the authorized user, or

- A tract is surrounded by land in non-Federal ownership and does not have public access; or
 - The lands support inadvertent unauthorized use or occupancy.
4. When lands have been offered for sale under direct or modified bidding procedures and they remain unsold, then the land will be re-offered by the competitive bidding procedure. In no case will the land be sold for less than fair market value.

Public participation and intergovernmental coordination will be sought and encouraged during the development of each sale. Where a decision is made to dispose of land within a grazing allotment, permittees and lessees shall be given 2 years prior notification before their grazing preference may be cancelled in whole or part. A permittee or lessee may unconditionally waive the 2-year prior notification.

The lands may be disposed at any time, provided a condition of the exchange or sale allows the existing grazing user to continue grazing livestock on the land for at least 2 years from the date the 2-year notice is received. 43 CFR 2711.1-3 addresses sales requiring grazing permit or lease cancellations.

In such cases, the condition of the disposal will include the same terms and conditions as the permit/lease in regard to numbers, kind of livestock, season-of-use, animal unit months, and maintenance of range improvements. Fees must be the same as the Federal grazing fees.

Grazing permittees/lessees will receive fair market value (less salvage value) for their interest in authorized permanent rangeland improvements located on public lands in accordance with 43 CFR 4120.3-6. Compensation for grazing improvements under the land sale action is addressed in 43 CFR 2711.4-1. If floodplain tracts are designated for disposal, the patent will contain language indemnifying the United States against any claims for loss or injury due to flooding.

Lands designated as retention areas may be offered for disposal through a competitive sale unless the authorized officer determines the interest of the public would best be served by modified competitive bidding or direct sale (WO IM-2002-143). Land ownership pattern within these areas are moderately consolidated and contain small tracts of land. Land sale may be pursued if the disposal of lands within designated retention areas, not including areas of critical environmental concerns (ACECs), special management areas (SMAs), and special recreational management areas (SRMAs) would help enhance manageability and consolidate land status. Several parcels have no legal public access which makes manageability difficult. The parcels offered for disposal shall contain no known significant resources values.

Wilderness study areas (WSAs) and retention areas within ACECs, SMAs, and SRMAs shall be excluded and unavailable for disposal through sales and/or exchanges. Consolidation of ownership within these specially managed areas would be through acquisition of state and private lands to continue improving the ownership and manageability. Any exchange involving lands within retention areas must be exchanged for lands with a higher resource value than lands being disposed.

Direct sales must be clearly determined by the authorized officer to ensure that the sale is in the best interest of the public. When lands have been offered for direct or modified bidding and they remain unsold, the land will be re-offered under competitive bidding procedures. Mineral (subsurface) estate will be retained for all sales that occur within designated retention areas. Permittees will be given 2 years prior notification to disposal of lands within a grazing allotment (permits/leases) before their grazing may be cancelled in whole or part.

Recreation and Public Purposes Patents

The Socorro Field Office will continue to issue patents to qualified governmental and nonprofit entities for public parks and recreations sites under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. These patents may be issued at less than fair market value as outlined in 43 CFR 2740. Applications for patent of public lands under the R&PP Act will be processed as a Socorro Field Office priority under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and will be subject to public review. Current policy dictates that new sanitary landfill sites will be patented and no new lease will be issued in the Socorro Resource Area pursuant to the R&PP Act. R&PP applications may be entertained in either retention or disposal zones; yet, a determination must always be made that the disposal action is in the public's interest.

Mineral Estate Disposal Policy

Disposal of the mineral estate is possible under Sections 206 and 209 of the FLPMA. It is the policy of the BLM to avoid disposing of the surface estate while retaining the mineral estate unless there are areas of "known mineral value," as defined in 43 CFR 2720.0.5. In areas of "known mineral value," the mineral estate (and the surface estate if substantial interference to development will result) should be retained except as described below.

Prior to any land disposal a "mineral value" determination must be made following a field reconnaissance by a BLM mineral examiner. A mineral report must be written to evaluate the leaseable, locatable, and saleable mineral potential of each proposed sale or exchange. Under the FLPMA, the conclusion of the mineral examiner will include an opinion as to whether the lands have "known mineral values." If professional judgment concludes that the land does not contain "known mineral values," the surface and subsurface estate may be conveyed, subject to any existing mining claim(s) or mineral leases.

A mining claim of record under Section 314 of the FLPMA generally prevents an exchange or sale. If the land is under mining claim, the surface should be retained under Federal ownership or the claim examined for validity. However, a validity examination may be waived and the BLM may proceed with the sale or exchange of both the surface and the mineral estate, subject to the existing mining claim(s) if:

- The land meets the criteria for disposal as determined through land-use planning; and
- The land has no "known mineral value" as determined by a BLM geologist or mining engineer; and
- The prospective patentee is willing to accept defensible title, preserving whatever rights the mining claimant may have. Conveyance of the surface and mineral estate would be subject to "existing mining claim(s)," allowing the mining claimant to apply for and receive full fee patent if a valid discovery were made prior to the date of transfer under Sections 206 or 209, or alternatively, receive patent to the mineral estate only if discovery were made after the original conveyance.

The BLM will proceed with a sale or exchange only after reasonable efforts have been made to secure relinquishment of the mining claims(s). If the mining claimant opposes the action, the Notice of Realty Action protest procedures will apply.

For a direct sale or an exchange, the proponent must be informed early and fully of the potential title conflicts and rights of the mining claimant under the law. The BLM should then proceed only if these

conditions are acceptable to the proponent. For a proposed competitive sale, the field office must carefully consider the effect on sale price, likelihood of success, and interests to be served if the sale is made subject to the rights of the mining claimant. If it is clearly in the public interest to proceed, the BLM must secure purchaser waiver of any liability against the United States in the event of subsequent title litigation.

In cases where lands are patented without a reservation of locatable minerals, a FLPMA patent is believed to have standing to bring private contest (43 CFR 4.450) against the mining claim(s). Should he or she do so, the burden is upon the patentee to prove lack of discovery. If the patentee is successful, or if the claims are abandoned or relinquished, the land will not be open to further location, and the patentee will receive full title to the involved locatable minerals.

Mining claim locations and mineral leases for lands in which the surface title has passed under the FLPMA disposal authority may be made only after regulations providing for such locations or leasing have been promulgated. Because these regulations have not as yet been issued, lands disposed of under the FLPMA are subject to de facto withdrawal. Lands disposed of under the FLPMA are not withdrawn from mineral material sales or free-use permits.

All minerals must be reserved if the Federal lands are conveyed out of Federal ownership pursuant to the FLPMA disposal authority, except in the limited instances that follow:

1. Sales

- a. If the public lands proposed for sale are determined to have "known mineral values" for locatable, leaseable, or saleable minerals, one of the following courses of action may be taken:
 - (1) Reject the offer to purchase or cancel the offer of sale.
 - (2) Dispose of the surface estate and reserve all of the mineral interests to the United States.
 - (3) Dispose of the surface and convey all or part of the mineral interests under terms set forth in Section 209(b) of the FLPMA.
- b. If the lands have no "known mineral value," the mineral interests may be simultaneously disposed of with the surface estate under authority of Section 209(b) of the FLPMA.

2. Exchanges

- a. Public lands which do not have "known mineral values" may be offered to exchange without any mineral reservation. This will apply whether or not the non-Federal party in an exchange controls the minerals under his or her land.
- b. If the public lands have some potential for mineral development, reserving the mineral interests is not mandatory as long as the values can be equalized by the payment of money and so long as the payment does not exceed 25 percent of the total value of the land.

In any case, normally it is desirable to keep surface and mineral ownership together in an exchange, whenever possible, to eliminate future problems associated with split estate ownership.

- c. If the public lands in an exchange are determined to have "known mineral values" for locatable, leasable, or saleable minerals, it may be in the public interest to cancel the offer, depending upon the significance of the deposits. The leasable minerals alone can be reserved if significant.

RIGHT-OF-WAY AVOIDANCE AND EXCLUSION AREAS PLAN

The Draft Socorro Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement identified a number of right-of-way avoidance and exclusion areas within the Socorro Decision Area. This approach would allow a right-of-way applicant to review resource area maps to determine what areas are closed to development and which open areas are subject to thorough examination with the potential for application rejection. All applicants would be notified that their project, if placed in an avoidance area, may be subject but not limited to requirements for recontouring and/or revegetating disturbed areas, painting certain above-ground structures to blend with the surrounding landscape and vegetation, and using special tower design and/or pole color.

All designated right-of-way exclusion areas would be closed to all forms of new right-of-way development. BLM Manual 1623.51 A. 1c states that right-of-way exclusion areas are areas where future right-of-way may be granted only when mandated by law. Mining claimants cannot be denied reasonable access to an exclusion area unless the land is withdrawn from mineral entry (see 43 CFR § 3809.0-6). The majority of the right-of-way exclusion areas are within wilderness study areas, areas of critical environmental concern, and areas assigned visual resource inventory class I (Visual Resource Management Class I). Class I is assigned to areas where management decisions have been made to preserve the scenic values within the natural landscape. The objective of this class is to greatly minimize any level of change to the existing characteristic of the landscape. As a point of clarification, it should be recognized that many of the areas or portions thereof discussed within this plan are presently under wilderness review and designated as wilderness study areas. There are 13 wilderness study areas totaling approximately 291,826 acres within the Socorro Decision Area. These lands are presently being managed under the Interim Policy and Guidelines for Land Under Wilderness Review dated July 5, 1995, and will continue to be managed until they are either added to the National Wilderness Preservation System or removed from wilderness review. Any right-of-way authorizations granted in these areas after they are removed from wilderness review would be managed under the prescriptions within this plan.

All right-of-way applicants should be aware that a mining claimant may refuse to allow a right-of-way to cross a claim if such claim was located prior to July 23, 1955. In such cases, BLM would reject a right-of-way application request or would help the applicant in the consideration of an alternative route which would be acceptable.

The right-of-way avoidance areas are defined in the BLM Manual 1623.52 as areas where future rights-of-way may be granted only when no feasible alternative route is available. The purpose of the right-of-way avoidance areas is to reduce the likelihood of rights-of-way being placed in these areas. When possible, alternative routes and sites would be considered. The Authorized Officer would closely review goals and objectives for special designated areas identified as avoidance areas in the resource management plan. This process would guide the Authorized Officer to determine which right-of-way applications would be rejected upon submittal or processed for issue. All issued right-of-way grants would be subject to special resource mitigating measures or stipulations. The terms and conditions of all right-of-way grants depend upon the sensitivity of the affected resource, applicable laws and regulations, and management objectives of special designated areas identified in the Socorro Resource Management Plan. All right-of-way proposals would require the preparation of a site specific environmental analysis to determine impacts and mitigating measures needed to specifically protect sensitive resource values.

The right-of-way avoidance areas also apply to land use leases and permits in accordance with Section 302 of the FLMPA. The special designated areas identified in the Resource Management Plan, including areas of critical environmental concern, special recreation management areas, and special management areas, include management prescriptions which exclude or avoid leases as well as rights-of-way. Leases and permits related to realty or land actions would be discouraged within avoidance areas. In cases when the location of the proposed activity cannot be avoided, the Authorized Officer will analyze it on a case-by-case basis. All leases and permits would be subject to the same review as stated in the paragraph above. All issued leases and permits would be subject to special resource mitigating measures and/or stipulations. These mitigation measures and/or stipulations prescribed would depend on the sensitivity of the affected resources, applicable laws and regulations, and the objective identified in the Resource Management Plan.

All expansions of existing right-of-ways, permits, and leases located within the avoidance areas would be avoided. When avoidance is impossible, the proposed expansion would be subject to mitigation measures. The Authorized Officer would closely review the goals and objectives of the management area in which the proposed expansion would occur. This would help determine whether to reject or authorize the proposed expansion. All expansions which significantly conflict with the goals and objectives for special designated areas identified in the Resource Management Plan would be rejected upon submittal.

When the number of facilities within an avoidance area reaches the point of saturation, the Authorized Officer may determine that no additional authorization will be granted. This determination would be made on the basis of whether the management objectives for the Visual Resource Management class for the area can no longer support additional facilities without jeopardizing the visual quality of the area.

This plan may be modified by the Authorized Officer at any time and is intended strictly as a guideline for the authorization of new proposed right-of-way project within the Socorro Resource Area.

Right-of-way application requests for the following uses in avoidance areas would be rejected upon submittal:

- Power lines larger than 14 kilovolt
- Aboveground oil, gas, and water pipelines
- Radio telescopes
- Airport runways
- New roads with more than a 14-foot-wide driving surface
- Advertisement signs
- Artillery testing
- Dams/reservoirs
- Railroads
- Tramways and conveyors
- Communications sites
- Solar energy development projects greater than 5 acres
- Wind power energy facilities

The following right-of-way applications may be issued on a case-by-case basis within avoidance areas:

- Solar energy facilities such as photovoltaic systems
- Irrigation ditches and canals
- Buried oil, gas, and water pipelines
- Power lines smaller than 14 kilovolt
- Telephone lines (buried preferred)

- Water storage tanks
- Air quality monitoring stations
- Staging areas
- Fiber optics (buried preferred)
- Water wells
- New roads with equal to or less than a 14-foot-wide driving surface
- Monitoring and testing facilities
- Filming permits
- Biomass facilities
- Wind energy facilities

The above lists are not all-inclusive and further analysis may result in denial of the right-of-way application or mitigation of the proposed right-of-way to meet management objectives for avoidance areas.

The above criteria apply to all avoidance areas included within any special designation boundaries. The avoidance areas within special designations will have different criteria to allow for issuance of rights-of-way, permits, and leases. The special designated area goals and resource avoidance criteria are identified in the management prescriptions for wilderness study areas, areas of critical environmental concern, special recreation management areas, and special management areas.

Appendix G

BLM Stewardship Contracting Guidance



APPENDIX G

BLM STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING GUIDANCE

The following information provides guidance on the preparation, implementation, and tracking of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) stewardship projects, in accordance with Section 323 of Public Law 108-7, the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003.

Authorization: Section 323 of Public Law 108-7 (Title 16, United States Code, Section 2104 as revised February 28, 2003 to reflect Sec. 323 of H.J. Res. 2 as enrolled [16 U.S.C. 2104]), the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, amended Pub. L. 105-277, sec. 347, to grant the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) authority until September 30, 2013, to enter into stewardship projects with private persons or public or private entities, by contract or by agreement, to perform services to achieve land management goals for the National Forests or public lands that meet local and rural community needs.

A. General

1. Definition – Stewardship projects are those activities used to accomplish one or more of the goals (section B (1)) listed in P.L. 108-7, Section 323 (b) where the BLM would enter into contract or agreement for services to achieve land management goals and meet local and rural community needs. In addition, a source for performance under a contract must be selected on a best value basis. The legislation authorizes the value of vegetative material to be applied as an offset against the cost of services received; and multi-year contract authority greater than five years but not to exceed 10 years.
2. Stewardship Contracting is not a replacement for our (BLM) established timber sale program. Forest management projects designed primarily to enhance volume are not suitable for stewardship contracting.
3. Ensure all stewardship projects comply with applicable environmental laws and regulations, including the appropriate level of environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and are consistent with the applicable land use plans.
4. Field units may use stewardship contracting as a tool to achieve resource work identified through the normal planning processes and as described in the 10-year Implementation Plan for the National Fire Plan.
5. Any vegetative material removal must be a by-product of meeting the stewardship contracting project goals as stated in section B (1). Removal of these products must be consistent with the objectives developed through the collaborative process and the applicable land use plan objectives.

B. Project Design

1. The primary objective of a stewardship contracting project is to achieve one or more of the land management goals that meet local and rural community needs. These goals as identified in the authorizing legislation may include but are not limited to:
 - a. road and trail maintenance or obliteration for improved water quality;
 - b. soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values;

- c. setting prescribed fires to improve composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat;
 - d. removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards or achieve other land management objectives;
 - e. watershed restoration and maintenance;
 - f. restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish habitat; and control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.
2. When designing stewardship contracting projects, consider projects involving treatments and techniques available to make forests, woodlands, and rangelands more resilient to natural disturbances such as fire, insects, disease, wind, and flood.
 3. For contracts exceeding five years in duration, Field Managers will include a concise rationale for contracts in project documentation. This rationale should consider such factors as the scope of the project, the type of the material to be treated, the availability of local capacity to process and use the material removed from the land, and the potential development of new markets for small diameter material, as well as operational factors such as local weather patterns, sensitive wildlife species habitat use cycles, and seasonal restrictions for wildfire prevention.
 4. An open, collaborative process shall be used to identify local and rural community needs. Seek early involvement of tribal governments and local government agencies, and any interested groups or individuals in various phases of project development and implementation. Utilize existing processes (publication of legal notices, newsletters, web based information, etc.) to publicize the opportunity for public involvement and the availability of environmental documents.

C. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Washington Office
 - a. The responsibility of the Washington Office (WO), AD-200 Directorate, is to work with the WO AD-800 Directorate, the National Office of Fire and Aviation, and the BLM National Business Center to develop and implement automated methodology to track the value of goods exchanged and services provided in conjunction with stewardship contracting projects.
 - b. AD 200 will produce the annual report to Congress required by the authorizing legislation.
 - c. The BLM national headquarters office (AD 200) will review and the DOI Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management will approve proposed stewardship contracts.
 - d. The national office will assign unique project numbers from a block reserved by the National Business Center (NBC). See F (2).
2. State Director
 - a. State Director approval for proposed stewardship contracting projects will be required prior to submission to the Washington Office.

- b. BLM State Directors must ensure that field offices complete the reporting and tracking requirements identified in this directive.
 - c. State Directors will set priorities for stewardship contracting projects within their state.
 - d. The proper use and management of stewardship contracting authority must be assessed as a normal part of BLM statewide or national resource program and activity reviews for those programs utilizing the authority. Particular programs of interest include Forest and Woodland Management, and Fire/Fuels Management.
3. State Coordinators – Each State Office has assigned a stewardship contracting project coordinator for their respective state. Responsibilities of the stewardship contracting project coordinator include:
- a. clarifying stewardship contracting project guidance
 - b. obtaining State Director review and approval
 - c. monitoring project status
 - d. ensuring that project reporting is accurate and timely
 - e. soliciting Field Office feedback and making recommendations to the WO on ways to improve the effectiveness of the stewardship contracting tool.
4. Field Office
- a. Submit proposed stewardship contracting contracts to the state coordinators using the Budget Planning System (BPS) format (Attachment 1) Stewardship Proposal Format, including fuels funded projects. All submissions must contain project objectives, location/size, type of treatment in detail, partners and collaborative processes used, length of project, status of NEPA, issues and highlights and a list of contacts.
 - b. During all phases of stewardship contracting (i.e. planning, contract development, funding, implementation and monitoring), the process will be integrated with other Field Office programs and activities, utilizing multiple resource specialists, including contracting personnel.
5. Contracting Officers
- a. Contracting Officers with Level III and IV warrants in the BLM National Business Center and Oregon State Office are delegated stewardship contracting authority according to the attached Delegation of Authority memorandum (Attachment 2), dated September 16, 2003, from the Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget.
 - b. After successful implementation of stewardship contracting projects, BLM may consider authorizing contracting officers in additional locations to assist in awarding stewardship contracts and agreements. At that time, the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA) should submit nomination(s) to the Office of Acquisition and Property Management for review and approval.

6. Contracting Officer's Representative - The "Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)" is the on-the-ground administrator for the Contracting Officer.

The COR's authorities and responsibilities are defined in the COR's Designation Letter. The COR is authorized to clarify technical requirements, and to review and approve work clearly within the scope of work. The COR is NOT authorized to issue changes pursuant to the changes clause or to in any other way modify the scope of work.

7. Project Inspector – "Project Inspector" (PI) means the person designated by the COR to perform, as needed, on-the-job government inspection of work accomplished by the Contractor.

The PI is responsible for checking the Contractor's compliance with the technical specifications, drawings, work schedule, and labor provisions at the site of the work.

D. Value Offset

1. The value of vegetative material may be used to offset the amount of appropriated funds necessary to accomplish service work as part of a stewardship contracting project.
2. Products that may be removed under stewardship contracting authority include vegetative material, such as, but not limited to sawlogs, firewood, post and poles, biomass, seed, shrubs, forage, fungi, and Christmas trees. See Special Forest Product Handbook, H-5400-2 or state specific Miscellaneous Forest Products Price Schedule, H-9352.
3. Vegetative material removed will be appraised at fair market value. Where practicable, and warranted by the market for such material, the value of the material will either be determined through a competitive bidding process or will be a specific required element of the best value criteria. In all cases, the value of the by-product for exchange must equal or exceed the appraised fair market value. Guidance on appraising the value of this material is provided in Attachment 3, Forest Products Appraisal Guidance for Stewardship Contracting.
4. The value of the vegetative material and the cost of the services to be performed must be clearly documented in the contract and on the Product Removal Report (see section J (1)). Before work can begin, the contractor must provide the government a proposed schedule of work (for a minimum of one work season), consistent with the contract for product removal, service work and net payments. As the contract is performed, the Field Office will record the actual volume and value (based on the contract bid price) removed, services performed, and net payments made as outlined in "Product Tracking Requirements," Section J.

E. Excess Receipts

1. When the value of the vegetative material exceeds the cost of the service work being performed in a stewardship project, the BLM is authorized to retain the excess receipts and to apply them to other stewardship projects without further appropriation.
2. Excess receipt collections from stewardship contracting projects shall be deposited according to BLM collection procedures into the Stewardship Project Fund and managed according to the definition and requirements contained in the BLM Fund Coding Handbook, H-1684-1. See Attachment 4, Subactivity 5921 Description.
3. In general, excess receipts shall be used to fund other stewardship projects within the State where the receipts were generated, as allocated by the State Director.

4. Funds generated as excess offset values (Section E (2)) from other stewardship contracting projects may also be used to fund the collaborative process used for multi-party monitoring and direct on-the-ground implementation costs. Excess offset values shall not be used to fund program planning, environmental assessments, overhead, administrative, or indirect costs. Managers should consult with the public and interested stakeholders early in the collaborative process for input on where excess offset values could be utilized within a stewardship project.

F. Project Submission, Funding and Accomplishment

1. Funds from a number of appropriated subactivities and permanent operating accounts may fund stewardship contracting project planning, preparation, implementation, administration, and monitoring. Offices should use the benefiting subactivity concept in determining which funding is appropriate to use.
2. All approved stewardship contracting projects will be tracked in the appropriate budget submission and accomplishment tracking database, applicable to the funding used. Fuels – NFPORS, all other subactivities – BPS/MIS, see B(4)(a).
3. Each stewardship contracting project will be assigned a project code by the national office from a specific set of codes reserved for stewardship contracting projects for the purpose of tracking project costs and accomplishments in the Management Information System (MIS). Where other projects codes have already been assigned, such as in the Fuels Program, those assigned project codes will be reported to the Headquarters Office and used to track the costs associated with those projects. The workload measure appropriate for the project will maintain the sub-activity specific tracking requirements.

G. Contracting/Product Sales

1. Stewardship contracting authority provides for the sale or exchange of vegetative material and the procurement of service work within one contract or agreement.
2. For stewardship contracting projects to be completed by contract with a combined value in excess of \$100,000 (services plus product value), the contracts must be prepared using the Performance Based Acquisition format (under development – will be available on the National Acquisition webpage at <http://web.blm.gov/natacq/>).
3. For stewardship projects below the \$100,000 threshold in G (2), either a service contract or an approved product sale instrument may be used. Typical prescriptive contract language (provisions or stipulations) would be used as appropriate for the contract/instrument and objectives of the project.
4. In addition to cost or price, the contracting officer must consider other “best value” factors, such as contractor past performance, technical approach, and local community benefits in determining contract award.
5. The use of nontraditional contractors, such as counties or not-for-profit or nongovernmental organizations, should be considered where interest is expressed and is consistent with existing authorities. Stewardship contracting contracts should not be automatically set aside for small business concerns.

6. For performance based contracts, the government reserves the right to review and revise the performance standards annually over the life of the contract by contract modification.
7. A stewardship contracting contract is not a timber sale contract and, as such, is not subject to the requirements contained in 43 CFR, Part 5400, Sale of Forest Products. However, it does not preclude including these requirements within a stewardship contract to adequately protect the government's interests (i.e. export restriction and Non-substitution provisions).
8. Service Contract Act wage rates apply to the stewardship contracting contract. Contract solicitations should be arranged to separate bid prices, specifications, and payments for service work, construction work, and product removal work to help distinguish where these wage rates apply.
9. When required by law, bonding must be used to protect the public interest. When not required by law, bonding may be used when deemed necessary.
 - a. Payment protection in the form of payment bonds should be used to protect the value of the by-product to be removed when the product will be removed prior to cash payment or the contractor's earning of conservation credits under the contract.
 - b. If necessary, performance bonds should be used to cover the value of the service to be provided.
 - c. In either case: (i) performance bond value should be set at no less than 20% of the value of the awarded service work; and (ii) payment bonds should be at least equal to 20% of the value of the by-product not covered by cash payment and/or earned conservation credits.
 - d. Contracting officers are encouraged to strive toward the concept of a single bond to cover "performance", which would include the product value (payment) and the service work rolled into one bond. The value of the bond would be the larger of the performance bond or payment bond as described above.
 - e. If construction activities are included, bonding for the construction activities shall be in accordance with the Miller Act.
10. Offices must ensure that the value of the product cut and/or removed does not exceed the value of the performance bond (not including the portion used to cover 20% of the awarded service work or Miller Act requirements) plus the value of any unpaid service work completed (conservation credits) plus any cash deposits made by the contractor. Field Offices should use the Stewardship Project Tracking Report, Attachment 4, to track the volume and value of the products removed to ensure that contract bonding and service work cover the government's interests.
11. If utilized, conservation credits (the value of unpaid service work completed) earned by a contractor are not transferable to another stewardship contract held by the same contractor. Conservation credits will be tracked via the Stewardship Project Tracking Report (page 2, Service Completion Form), Attachment 5.

H. Agreements.

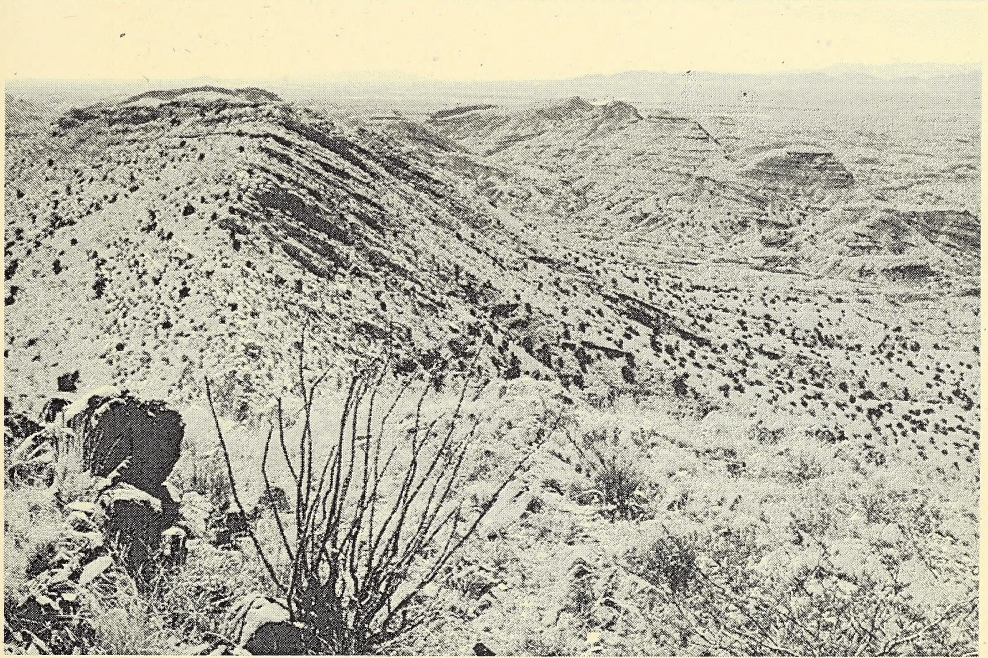
1. Assistance agreements are designed to be used when an outside party requests government financial assistance to support a public purpose. Stewardship contracting projects are designed to achieve specific land management goals, consistent with applicable land use plans. As such, use of assistance agreements to implement stewardship contracting project treatments must be carefully screened and limited use of such agreements may result. (See Agreements Handbook H-1511-1)
2. Decisions to use Assistance Agreements rather than contracts must comply with existing BLM guidance implementing the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977, as amended.

I. Monitoring

1. BLM will use multiparty monitoring, open to all interested parties, to monitor and evaluate a representative sampling of projects and programs at the appropriate levels. Project level monitoring should be conducted where sufficient public interest exists and funding and/or sufficient volunteer workforce permits. Where adequate up-front funding does not exist to support multiparty monitoring, excess offset values may be used to conduct multi-party monitoring, Section E (2).
2. WO-270 will coordinate with the Forest Service, on an appropriate time frame, a process to establish and/or conduct interagency multi-party monitoring for evaluating and reporting on collaboration and the role of local communities and other external stakeholders in the development of stewardship contracting contracts and agreements. One objective of this monitoring effort is to analyze the effectiveness of stewardship contracting relative to other management tools.

Appendix H

Rangeland Management



APPENDIX H

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

NEW MEXICO STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The 1989 Socorro Resource Management Plan was amended by the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Statewide Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (New Mexico Standards and Guidelines). As a result of the amendment, the New Mexico Standards and Guidelines were incorporated into the 1989 Resource Management Plan, and would be carried forward in this Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement.

The standards of land health are expressions of physical and biological condition or degree of function required for healthy, sustainable lands and define the minimum resource conditions that must be achieved. The three standards that apply to the Planning Area are:

1. Upland Sites Standard

Upland ecological sites are in a productive and sustainable condition within the capability of the site. Upland soils are stabilized and exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate for the soil type, climate, and landform. The kind, amount, and/or pattern of vegetation provides protection on a given site to minimize erosion and assist in meeting State and Tribal water quality standards.

Indicators for this standard may include but are not limited to:

Consistent with the capability of the ecological site, soils are stabilized by appropriate amounts of standing live vegetation, protective litter, and/or rock cover.

Erosion is indicated by flow patterns characteristic of surface litter soil movement, gullies and rills, and plant pedestalling.

Satisfactory plant protection is indicated by the amount and distribution of desired species necessary to prevent accelerated erosion.

2. Biotic Communities, Including Native, Threatened-Endangered, and Special Status Species Standard

Ecological processes such as hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow support productive and diverse native biotic communities, including special status, threatened, and endangered species appropriate to site and species. Desired plant communities goals maintain and conserve productive and diverse populations of plants and animals, which sustain ecological functions and processes.

Indicators for this standard may include but are not limited to:

Commensurate with the capability of the ecological site, plant and animal populations are productive, resilient, diverse and sustainable.

Landscapes are composed of communities in a variety of successional stages and patterns.

Diversity and composition of communities are indicated by the kinds and amount of species.

Endangered and special status species are secure and recovering, with the goal of delisting and ensuring that additional species need not be listed within New Mexico.

3. Riparian Sites Standard

Riparian areas are in a productive, properly functioning, and sustainable condition, within the capability of that site. Adequate vegetation of diverse age and composition is present that will withstand high stream flow, capture sediment, provide for groundwater recharge, provide habitat, and assist in meeting State and Tribal water quality standards.

Indicators for this standard may include but are not limited to:

Stream channel morphology and stability as determined by gradient, width/depth ratio, channel roughness, and sinuosity.

Streambank stability as determined by degree of shearing and sloughing, vegetative cover on the bank.

Appropriate riparian vegetation includes a mix of communities of species with a range of age, density and growth form.

When an evaluation determines that one or more standards are not being met, then the causal factor or factors will be determined. As stated in the Record of Decision for the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management: "When an evaluation concludes that an area does not meet one or more standard(s), the Bureau of Land Management will determine the causal factor(s) in not meeting the standard(s). When current livestock grazing practices or levels of grazing use are determined to be significant factors, the Bureau of Land Management authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practical, but no later than the next grazing year (43 Code of Federal Regulations Section 4180.2 (c))." Guidelines were established for livestock grazing to be implemented when an area was not meeting the standard or standards and the causal factor was determined to livestock grazing practices or levels of grazing use. Guidelines are tools such as grazing systems, vegetative treatments, or range improvement projects designed to assist in grazing management. Implementation of guidelines will be done in consultation, cooperation and coordination with the grazing permittee/leasee, involved landowners, and interested public.

Guidelines pertain to livestock grazing only and if the causal factor is determined to be another activity; there are not established guidelines to be implemented. When other activities appear to be the reason for not meeting the standard, management actions that address that particular activity will be implemented that is consistent with policy and regulations governing that activity.

The processes for assessing the standards are evaluated at the watershed level and are an ongoing process. The Socorro Field Office has initiated assessments on approximately 218,000 acres and has determined those areas to be meeting the standards. Assessments are completed by utilizing existing data and Indicators of Rangeland Health (TR 1734-6). The assessment characterizes the status of the ecological processes (water cycle, energy flow and nutrient cycle) by interpreting attributes such as the soil/site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity in relation to the ecological site.

ALLOTMENT STATISTICS

Table E-1 lists the 2005 grazing allotments that are completely or partially within the Planning Area. Grazing allotments are mapped in the Management Situation Analysis, on file in the Socorro Field Office.

TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
00054	Shaw Canyon	03	M	6,936
00077	Emery	15	M	96
00079	Stokes Flat	03	M	5,017
00080	Box Car 7	03	M	12
00081	Estrada Ranch	15	I	2,100
00083	Cat Mountain	03	M	240
00084	Paul Lund	03	I	204
00085	Patterson Canyon	03	M	192
00087	Cottonwood Spring	03	M	31
00088	Mariano Mesa Ranch	03	M	96
00089	South La Jencia	15	M	564
00090	Panther Canyon	15	M	54
00091	Cerro Prieto	15	M	24
00092	Agua Fria Creek	03	M	3,780
00093	Tres Montosas	03	M	234
00094	Escondido Creek	03	I	1,488
00095	Datil Airstrip	03	M	48
00097	Tanque De Caballos	03	M	108
00098	Chavez Ranch	03	M	70
00099	Florenio Orona	03	I	420
00100	Gatlin Lake	03	M	576
00102	Orona Largo Creek	03	M	678
00103	Lopez Draw	03	M	59
00105	North Fork Alamacito	15	M	24
00106	Santa Rita	03	I	1,618
00107	Summers Community	03	M	271
00107	Summers Community	03	M	173
00107	Summers Community	03	M	233
00107	Summers Community	03	M	1,020
00107	Summers Community	03	M	95
00108	Reynolds	03	M	132
00109	Pattys Hole	03	M	751
00117	North Fox Mountain	03	M	108
00125	Semi Lonesome	03	I	1,682
00127	Bat Cave	03	M	11
00128	Williams Home	03	M	12
00129	R M Chavez	03	M	60
00132	W Ranch	15	M	48
00133	Tres Lagunas	15	M	288
00134	Coal Canyon	03	M	60
00135	Bill G & W F Green	15	M	252

**TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS**

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
00136	Silver Creek	15	I	1,284
00137	Pietown Dike	15	M	52
00138	Iron Mountain	15	M	132
00139	Pietown TR 15	15	M	8
00141	Sawtooth Mountain	15	M	120
00144	NM AZ State Line	15	M	48
00146	Monticello Canyon	15	M	72
00147	Kinsely Canyon	15	M	120
00148	Wahoo Ranch	15	M	1,503
00149	Williamson	15	M	60
00150	Cat Lake	15	M	192
00151	Montoya	03	M	109
00152	Dusty Ranch	03	M	24
00154	Nichols Individual	15	M	36
00155	San Ignacio	03	I	156
00164	Lew Daniels	03	M	12
00165	Snake Hill	03	M	354
00168	Tarpley	03	M	48
00192	West Emery	03	M	36
01106	Ojo Saladito	03	M	1,562
01107	Bear Springs	15	M	4
01112	Riley Community	03	M	156
01112	Riley Community	03	M	36
01112	Riley Community	03	M	60
01116	Puertecito Baranco	03	M	1,750
01117	Canon Bonito	15	M	408
01121	Rio Salado West	03	M	756
01122	Abeytas	03	M	300
01123	Abeytas	15	M	48
01125	San Ignacio Creek	03	I	804
01126	Cow Springs	03	I	1,332
01127	Santa Rita	15	M	9
01128	Patterson	03	M	1,588
01129	New Driveway	03	M	201
01136	Rio Puerco	03	M	1,176
01137	North Ladron	03	M	1,620
01140	Monte Negro	03	I	1,929
01143	Comanche Arroyo	15	I	24
01145	D Cross Mountain	15	M	356
01159	La Jencia Creek	03	I	2,013
01177	Ladron Peak	03	M	600
01181	Lopez Community	03	M	575
01181	Lopez Community	03	M	325
01186	West Ladron	03	M	2,574
01250	Buffalo Head	03	I	144
01251	Harless Ranch	03	M	1428

**TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS**

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
01252	Silver Road	03	1	1,608
01253	Sand Sage	03	1	240
01254	Bordo Atravesado	03	1	2,714
01255	Bosquecito	03	1	312
01256	Llano	03	M	612
01258	Tio Bartolo	03	M	365
01259	Four Hills	03	1	360
01260	Sierra Larga	03	M	2,112
01261	Scott Ranch	03	M	2,163
01262	Las Cañas	03	1	1,296
01263	Black Mesa	03	1	873
01264	Armijo Community	03	1	667
01264	Armijo Community	03	1	308
01266	Coyote Spring	03	M	1,512
01268	Ryan Hill	03	M	246
01269	Torreon Community	03	M	2,822
01269	Torreon Community	03	M	976
01270	Milligan Gulch	03	C	485
01271	Mesa Redonda	03	M	1,704
01272	San Pasqual	03	M	1,836
01273	Bruton River	03	M	1,800
01274	Rock Creek	03	C	198
01275	Oscura	03	M	5,182
01276	Four Sections	03	M	362
01277	San Jose Canyon	03	1	2,135
01278	Anaya Well	03	1	348
01279	Silver Canyon	03	1	1,298
01280	Tecolote Draw	03	1	2,388
01281	So Ranch	03	M	696
01282	Bingham	03	M	180
01283	Blackington Mountain	03	1	1,572
01284	Mesa Well Canyon	03	1	1,287
01285	Sand Mountain	03	M	1,884
01286	Blackington Mountain West	03	M	840
01288	Rio Grande	03	1	315
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	300
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	96
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	600
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	72
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	84
01289	Jornada Community	03	M	144
01290	Rock Springs Canyon	03	M	1,344
01291	Prairie Springs	03	M	1,536
01292	Chaunte Canyon	03	M	543
01293	Malpais	03	M	5,427
01294	Hickman Ranch	03	M	936

TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
01295	Pipe Ranch	03	M	1,632
01296	Antelope West	03	M	247
01297	Puertecito Del Lemitar	03	M	1233
01298	Wineglass	03	M	690
01299	Pequeno	03	C	422
01300	Casas De Piedras	03	M	318
01301	White Sage	03	I	4,727
01302	So Ranch	15	M	544
01303	Jornada Individual	03	M	1,032
01305	Chato	03	M	6
01306	Veranito	03	M	445
01308	San Antonito	03	I	146
01309	S Mesa Redonda	03	M	684
01310	Chupadera Wash	03	M	525
01312	La Arenosa	03	I	535
01315	Polvadera	03	C	102
01317	San Pedro	03	I	240
01318	Pueblito Community	03	C	24
01318	Pueblito Community	03	C	34
01321	Puertecito Gap	03	M	684
01322	Parida	03	M	1,248
01323	Water Canyon	03	M	508
01324	Water Canyon	15	M	240
01327	Cedar Pass	03	M	1,035
01328	Jones	03	M	912
01329	Las Lomas	03	M	240
01330	East Well	03	M	461
01339	Twin Tanks	15	M	65
01340	Twin Tanks	15	M	155
01341	Scholle	15	M	23
01342	Cerro Pelon	15	M	300
01343	Abo	15	M	144
01344	La Jencia Ranch	15	M	708
01345	Oso Flatts	15	M	96
01346	La Jencia Ranch	03	M	36
01347	Blue Springs	15	M	15
01348	Cerro Montoso	15	M	407
01349	Dripping Springs	15	M	234
01350	Viejo Arroyo	15	M	237
01351	Rienhardt Individual	15	M	216
01352	U Butte	15	M	624
01353	Red Tanks Canyon	15	M	276
01354	Granite Mountain	15	M	13
01356	Tip Top	15	M	24
01361	Brushy Mountain	15	M	166
01365	Black Hills Ranch	03	M	6,696

**TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS**

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
01366	Dragoo Tank	03	M	1,968
01367	Lobo Canyon	03	M	2,762
01368	Chupadera Mesa	03	M	7,776
01369	Lincoln County	03	M	132
01370	Cat Mesa East	03	M	1,218
01371	Cuate Canyon	03	M	858
01372	Largo Canyon	03	M	2,592
01373	Carrizozo	03	M	2,160
01374	Red Lake	15	M	48
01375	Claunch Se	15	M	168
01376	Gallacher North	03	M	1,821
10001	Twin Peaks	03	M	134
10002	Qualls	15	M	120
10003	Qualls	03	M	132
10004	Criswell	03	M	744
10005	Horse Springs	03	M	168
10007	Mcbroom	03	M	180
10008	Quemado Breaks	03	I	162
10009	Sullivan	03	M	408
10010	Kellog Canyon	15	I	2,387
10011	Vevarosa	03	I	1,968
10014	Half Circle D	03	M	72
10015	Mangas	03	M	84
10016	Jones Place	03	M	144
10017	Patterson Canyon	03	M	514
10018	Tejana Mesa	03	M	1,128
10019	East Salt Lake	03	M	132
10020	Wilbur Wadley Draw	03	M	96
10023	Box Lake	03	M	2,688
10024	Coyote Canyon	03	M	4,360
10027	Burnett	03	M	108
10028	Y Ranch	03	I	4,329
10029	Cross Line	03	M	1,152
10030	Butler	03	M	864
10031	Arroyo Baca	03	M	67
10032	Adobe Ranch	03	I	7,973
10033	Castillo	03	M	50
10034	Fria Creek	03	M	168
10035	Mesa Ranch	03	M	504
10036	Toms Rock	15	M	30
10037	Wilbur Wadley Draw	15	M	120
10038	Red Hill South	03	M	1,716
10039	Pedro A Chavez Est	03	M	12
10040	Coyote Canyon	15	M	854
10041	Richard M Chavez	03	M	360
10042	Rito Creek	03	M	60

**TABLE H-1
GRAZING ALLOTMENT STATISTICS**

Allotment No.	Allotment Name	Preference Code	Management Code	Permitted AUMS
10043	Zuni Plateau	03	M	540
10045	West Salt Lake	03	M	84
10046	Walker	03	M	499
10047	Durfee	03	M	356
10048	Curtis Ranch	03	M	864
10049	Baca Spring	03	M	76
10050	Eagar Red Hill	03	M	864
10051	Emery	03	I	379
10052	Cemetery Road	15	M	25
10053	Estrada Ranch	03	I	1,764
10055	Kiehne Place	03	M	552
10056	Headquarters	03	I	2,220
10057	Carrizo Creek North	03	M	1,536
10058	Morine-White	03	M	2,232
10059	Sitka Spruce	03	M	48
10062	Red Hill North	03	I	3,607
10063	Anderson Peak	03	M	540
10064	Evans Well	03	M	104
10065	Zuni Plateau	15	M	32
10067	East Rito Creek	03	M	540
10068	Panther Canyon	03	M	192
10069	Cerro Prieto	03	M	588
10070	Rancho Alegre	03	M	8,726
10071	North Fork Alamocito	03	M	543
10072	Mangas Ranch	03	M	2,328
10073	Heavenly Acres	03	M	192
10074	Crosby Canyon	03	M	72
10110	West Horse Mountain	03	I	732
10111	East Horse Mountain	03	I	308
10113	Big Tiny Little	15	M	3
10114	Datil Airstrip	15	M	3
10115	Largo Creek	03	M	168
10116	Spring Canyon Ranch	03	I	514
10118	Alamito Ranch	03	M	6
10119	Windrider	03	M	444
10120	Aragon Well	03	M	264
10121	Big Tiny Little	03	M	3
10122	Shay	15	M	72
10123	Goat Tank Canyon	03	M	228
10124	Hale Well	15	M	6
10126	Limestone Canyon	03	I	1,123

NOTES: C = Custodial
I = Improve
M = Maintain
AUM = animal unit per month

In the 1980s, the Bureau of Land Management developed classification criteria to assist field offices in identifying management priorities by allotment. Allotments are placed in one of three categories—Maintain, Improve, or Custodial—based on certain criteria, as follows:

Maintain (M) Category

- Present range condition is satisfactory
- Allotments have moderate to high resource production potential and are producing near their potential (or trend is moving in that direction)
- No serious resource-use conflicts and/or controversies exist
- Opportunities may exist for positive economic return from public investment
- Present management appears satisfactory
- Other local criteria

Improve (I) Category

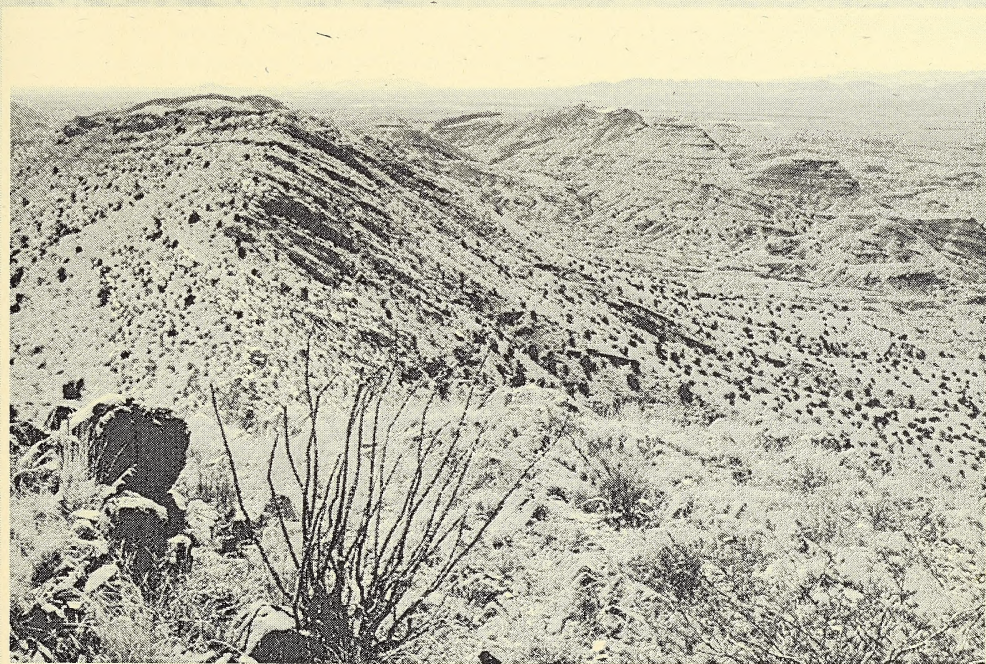
- Present range condition is unsatisfactory
- Allotments have a moderate or high resource production potential and are producing at low to moderate levels
- Serious resource-use conflicts and/or controversies exist
- Opportunities exist for positive economic return for public investment
- Present management appears unsatisfactory
- Other local criteria

Custodial (C) Category

- Present range condition is not a factor
- Allotments have a low resource production potential and are producing at low to moderate levels
- Limited resource-use conflicts and/or controversies may exist
- Opportunities for positive economic return on public investments do not exist or are constrained by technological or economic factors
- Opportunities exist to achieve the allotments' potential through changes in management
- Other local criteria

Appendix I

Minerals Management



APPENDIX I MINERALS MANAGEMENT

This appendix describes (1) the results of the application of unsuitability criteria for coal leasing that is part of the Federal coal lands review process, (2) standard lease terms and conditions and lease stipulations for fluid minerals leasing, and (3) existing withdrawals from mineral entry.

APPLICATION OF SUITABILITY CRITERIA FOR COAL LEASING

As required by the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the Department of Interior has developed criteria to determine whether public lands are unsuitable for further consideration for coal leasing. This unsuitability assessment was applied to the portion of the Planning Area identified as having high coal potential (see the Energy and Minerals Potential Report dated October 2003). In the following discussion, the results of the application of each of the unsuitability criteria and exceptions are described.

The 20 unsuitability criteria contained in 43 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 3461.5 were used to assess the unsuitability for mining in the area of high coal potential. The intent of the unsuitability criteria application is to identify the areas with resources that could not be properly protected or maintained if the area were leased for coal mining.

After initial survey of the high coal potential area, unsuitable areas (as defined by specific criteria) were identified. Following the identification and formulation of alternatives to be addressed by this Resource Management Plan and as a result of public comments submitted, affected resources within the high coal potential area were reexamined in light of the current set of unsuitability criteria.

Summary

At this time, the area of high coal potential does not contain lands meeting unsuitability Criteria No. 1, Federal Land Systems; No. 2, Rights-of-way; No. 4, Wilderness Study Areas; No. 5, Scenic Class One Lands; No. 6, Scientific Study Areas; No. 8, Natural Areas; No. 9, Federal Listed Species/Habitats; No. 10, State Listed Species/Habitats; Criteria No. 11, Eagle Nests; No. 12, Eagle Roosts; No. 13, Falcon Nests; No. 17, Municipal Watersheds; No. 18, National Resource Waters; No. 19, Alluvial Valley Floors; and No. 20, State Criteria.

Mitigating measures have been developed which would allow lands identified as meeting Criteria No. 3, Roads and Dwellings; No. 14, High Interest Federal Species; No. 15, High Interest State Species; and No. 16, 100-year Floodplains, to be considered suitable for coal leasing.

Criteria No. 7, National Register of Historic Places and multiple-use screening criteria; No. 12, Cultural Resource Sites Eligible for Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places; and No. 13, Native American Areas of Federal Significance have removed lands from being suitable to coal leasing.

After applying the unsuitability criteria and multiple use screening analysis, approximately 3,200 acres are carried forward as suitable for coal leasing (Figure D-1, High Potential Coal Lands Carried Forward).

Unsuitability Criteria

3461.5(a)(I) Criterion No. 1

All Federal lands included in the following land systems or categories shall be considered unsuitable: National Park System, National Wildlife Refuge System, National System of Trails, National Wilderness Preservation System, National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, National Recreation Areas, lands acquired with money derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Forests, and Federal lands in incorporated cities, towns, and villages.

There are no Federal lands systems within the San Augustine Coal Area; therefore, this criterion does not apply.

3461.5(b)(I) Criterion No. 2

Federal lands within rights-of-way or easements or within surface leases for residential, commercial, industrial, or other public purposes. Federally owned surface shall be considered unsuitable.

There are no Federal lands rights-of-way or easements in the high coal potential area; therefore, this criterion does not apply.

3461.5(c)(I) Criterion No. 3

Federal lands affected by section 522(c)(4) and (5) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 shall be considered unsuitable. This includes lands within 100 feet of the outside line of the right-of-way of a public road or within 100 feet of a cemetery, or within 300 feet of any public building, school, church, community or institutional building or public park or within 300 feet of an occupied dwelling.

Presently there is only one dwelling located on Federal lands within the high coal potential area. No cemeteries, including single grave sites or public road rights-of-way, have been identified within the area under review.

Exceptions - Lands within the area of high coal potential, which are affected by this criterion, can be considered suitable for further coal lease consideration with the following stipulation:

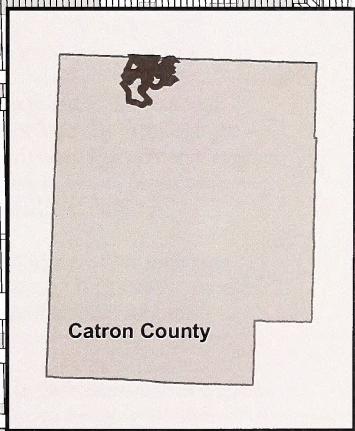
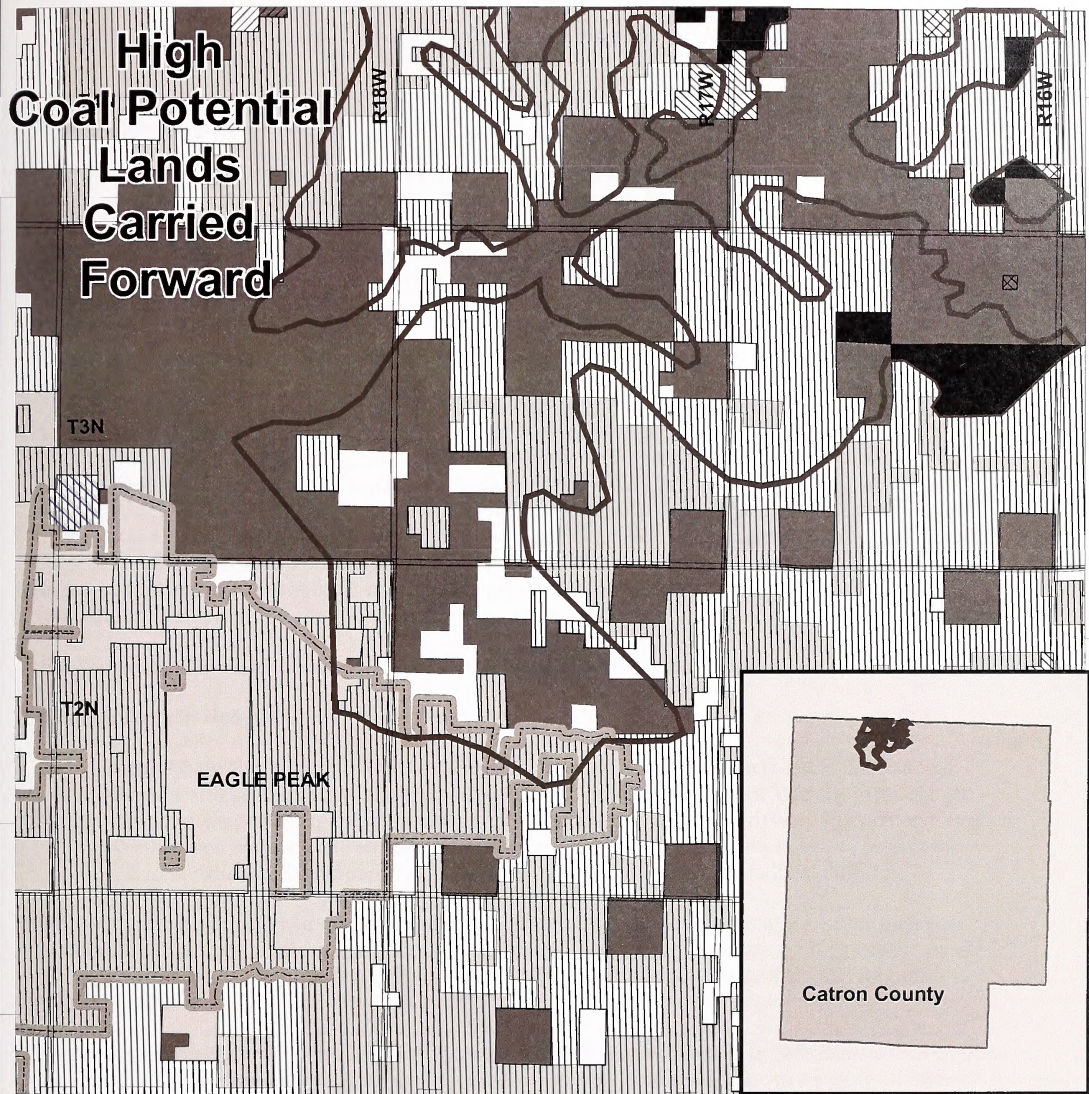
1. A lease may be issued for lands for which owners of occupied dwellings have given written permission to mine within 300 feet of their buildings.

3461.5(d)(1) Criterion No. 4

Federal lands designated as wilderness study areas shall be considered unsuitable while under review by the Administration and the Congress for possible wilderness designation. For any Federal land which is to be leased or mined prior to completion of the wilderness inventory by the surface management agency, the environmental assessment or impact statement on the lease sale or mine plan shall consider whether the land possesses the characteristics of a wilderness study area. If the finding is affirmative, the land shall be considered unsuitable, unless issuance of noncompetitive coal leases and mining on leases is authorized under the Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

There are no WSAs in the high coal potential area; therefore, criterion does not apply.

High Coal Potential Lands Carried Forward



Legend

Mineral ownership

	All Federal Minerals		NOT UNSUITABLE (Lands Carried Forward)
	Coal Only		BLM
	Oil, Gas & Coal Only		Indian Trust
	No Federal Minerals		Private
	Oil & Gas Only		State
	High Coal Potential		Wilderness Study Area

0 1.5 3 6 Miles



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

3461.5(e)(l) Criterion No. 5

Scenic Federal lands designated by visual resource management analysis as Class I (an area of outstanding scenic quality or high visual sensitivity) but not currently on the National Register of Natural Landmarks shall be considered unsuitable. A lease may be issued if the surface management agency determines that surface coal mining operations will not significantly diminish or adversely affect the scenic quality of the designated area.

There are no visual resource management (VRM) Class I areas in the high coal potential area; therefore, this criterion does not apply.

3461.5(f)(1) Criterion No. 6

Federal lands under permit by the surface management agency, and being used for scientific studies involving food or fiber production, natural resources, or technology demonstrations and experiments shall be considered unsuitable for the duration of the study, demonstration or experiment, except where mining could be conducted in such a way as to enhance or not jeopardize the purposes of the study, as determined by the surface management agency, or where the principal scientific user or agency gives written concurrence to all or certain methods of mining.

The high coal potential area does not contain lands being utilized for this purpose.

3461.5(g)(l) Criterion No. 7

All publicly and privately owned places on Federal lands which are included in the National Register of Historic Places shall be considered unsuitable. This shall include any areas that the surface management agency determines, after consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), are necessary to protect the inherent values of the property that made it eligible for listing in the National Register.

This area has a high density of recorded and unrecorded cultural resource sites. Much of the high coal potential area has been inventoried for cultural resources. All surveyed areas show a high density of sites, and many of the sites have been determined eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

For the remaining high coal potential areas, a literature search was performed to determine if sites eligible to the National Register were present. The literature search was conducted on areas meeting all three of the following criteria:

1. Within boundaries of high coal potential coal areas
2. Federal mineral ownership
3. Outside the boundary of the Zuni Salt Lake Sanctuary site

A total of 181 sites were identified as having been recorded in the areas meeting the three criteria. Approximately two-thirds were found to be eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register.

NOTE: These archaeological sites and socio-cultural sites clearly meet the definition of a resource of a unique nature with local or regional importance. These sites are considered under the multiple-use screen.

3461.5(h)(l) Criterion No. 8

Federal lands designated as natural areas or as National Natural Landmarks shall be considered unsuitable.

The high coal potential area does not contain lands designated as natural areas or National Natural Landmarks.

3461.5(i)(l) Criterion No. 9

Federally designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered plant and animal species, and habitat for Federal threatened or endangered species which is determined by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the surface management agency to be of essential value and where the presence of threatened or endangered species has been scientifically documented, shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the high coal potential area does not contain federally designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered plant and animal species or habitat for threatened or endangered species determined to be of essential value by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the surface management agency.

3461.5(j)(l) Criterion No. 10

Federal lands containing habitat determined to be critical or essential for plant or animal species listed by a State pursuant to State law as endangered or threatened shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the high coal potential area does not contain Federal lands containing habitat determined to be critical or essential for plant or animal species listed by the State of New Mexico as threatened or endangered.

3461.5(k)(l) Criterion No. 11

A bald or golden eagle nest or site on Federal lands that is determined to be active and an appropriate buffer zone of land around the nest site shall be considered unsuitable. Consideration of availability of habitat for prey species and of terrain shall be included in the determination of buffer zones. Buffer zones shall be determined in consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Eagle nesting habitat was surveyed during the summer/fall of 1983. A Raptor Nest Report was initiated for each nest or group of nests located. Tentative buffer zones were identified. Following a nesting survey conducted during the spring of 1987, those locations identified as active were retained as unsuitable based on this criterion.

Exception - The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with concurrence from the USFWS, has determined that mitigating measures are neither practical nor desirable at this time.

3461.5(l)(l) Criterion No. 12

Bald and golden eagle roost and concentration areas on Federal lands used during migration and wintering shall be considered unsuitable.

Year-round eagle roosting areas have been identified within the high coal potential area.

Exception - The BLM with concurrence from the USFWS has determined that mitigating measures are neither practical nor desirable at this time.

3461.5(m)(1) Criterion Number 13

Federal lands containing a falcon (excluding kestrel) cliff nesting site with an active nest and a buffer zone of Federal land around the nest site shall be considered unsuitable. Consideration of availability of habitat for prey species and of terrain shall be included in the determination of buffer zones. Buffer zones shall be determined in consultation with the USFWS.

Falcon nesting habitat located within the high coal potential area was surveyed during the summer/fall of 1983. A Raptor Nest Report was initiated for each nest or suspected nest located. Following a nesting survey conducted during the spring of 1987, those locations determined to be active were retained on the unsuitability criterion. Additional spring surveys are conducted within the high coal potential area yearly. Results of these surveys may change the amount of Federal mineral estate determined unsuitable because of this criterion.

Exception - The BLM, with concurrence from the USFWS, has determined that mitigating measures are neither practical nor desirable at this time.

3461.5(n)(1) Criterion No. 14

Federal lands that are high priority habitat for migratory bird species of high Federal interest on a regional or national basis, as determined jointly by the surface management agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service, shall be considered unsuitable.

High priority habitat is defined as an area containing one or more limited environmental factors needed to support a population of at least one of the listed species. All high priority habitat must meet the following criteria:

1. It must be used regularly (use may be limited to one season during the year) by one or more of the listed species.
2. Its availability for uses such as feeding, reproduction, nesting, molting and/or wintering must be either limited or supportive of concentrations of a listed species in the indicated coal region or sub region.
3. It must contain a combination of natural or manmade factors; e.g., riparian vegetation, reservoirs, cliff sites, tall buildings, etc. that provide an essential quantity or quality of one or more of the habitat requirements of a listed species; i.e., food, water, cover or space.

In order to assess an area as being unsuitable for all or certain stipulated methods of coal mining, both the "high Federal interest" and the "high priority habitat" aspects of this criterion must be met; e.g., an area must support listed species and contain habitat of these species which meet all three of the above indicated habitat criteria.

The areas identified as meeting criterion No. 14 are intermittent wetlands, playas or reservoirs that contain water during the spring and early summer, produce forbs during the summer, and contain water during the fall and winter. These areas are known to be utilized during the spring and fall migrations by: white-faced ibis, western grebe, great blue heron, long-billed curlew, and large concentrations of migratory waterfowl which provide a prey base for wintering bald eagles. At this time no ferruginous

hawk nest locations are known to occur on Federal mineral estate within the high coal potential area. Additional surveys will be conducted within the high coal potential area yearly. Results of these surveys may change the amount of Federal mineral estate determined to be unsuitable because of this criteria.

Exceptions- The 640 acres identified as meeting criterion No. 14 within the high coal potential area can be considered suitable for further coal lease consideration by applying the following stipulations:

1. Affected wetlands and appropriate drainages sufficient to provide equal or enhanced habitat values will be replaced by the lessee on a site-specific basis.
2. The lessee will consult with the BLM; the BLM will consult with the surface owner, USFWS and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) prior to alteration of the affected wetland.

3461.5(o)(1) Criterion Number 15

Federal lands which the surface management agency and the State jointly agree are fish and wildlife habitat for resident species of high interest to the State and which are essential for maintaining these priority wildlife species shall be considered unsuitable.

The areas identified under criterion No. 14 can also be applicable to criterion No. 15; in addition, the NMDGF has identified mule deer and ferruginous hawks. Pronghorn antelope are included under this criterion because of the occurrence of an isolated herd utilizing a restricted habitat on a mesa top in the area.

Areas identified as mule deer winter range within the high coal potential area are also adjacent to or included in the areas covered by criterion No. 12, eagle roosting areas. Mule deer wintering range (80 acres) are included under this criterion.

Those areas identified under criterion No.14 are included in the exception for that criterion.

Exceptions — The areas identified as prairie dog locations will be suitable for further coal lease consideration by incorporating the following stipulations:

1. Proposed activities in or adjacent to the identified area will be preceded by a complete black-footed ferret inventory of the prairie dog colony.
2. All black-footed ferret inventory and survey procedures conducted by the lessee will be reviewed and approved by BLM, in consultation with the USFWS and the NMDGF.

3461.5(p)(l) Criterion No. 16

Federal lands in riverine, coastal and special floodplains (100-year recurrence interval) on which the surface management agency determines that mining could not be undertaken without substantial threat of loss of life or property shall be considered unsuitable for all or certain stipulated methods of coal mining.

The first drainages that were analyzed for 100-year floodplain determination were those that drained at least 10 square miles. Watersheds were delineated and tentative floodplain transect locations established. Two or more transects were run for each probable floodplain location using the stadia method. Channel cross sections were drawn and flood stages marked on them. The U.S. Geological Survey method from

Water Resources Investigations 82-24, "Techniques for Estimated Flood Discharges for Unregulated Streams in New Mexico", and H. R. Hejl, Jr.'s (U.S. Geological Survey) draft paper "Stream flow Characteristics as Related to Basin Characteristics in Strippable Coal-Resource Areas of Northwestern New Mexico" were used to determine the 100-year flood discharge. The resultant discharges computed using the two different methods were very close. Using the Manning's equation and knowing the channel geometry and stage relationship, the 100-year floodplain was then determined and drawn on 7.5-minute topographic maps. The floodplains were later verified with aerial photographs. To accurately determine the 100-year floodplain, USGS said that about 20 floodplain transects per area are needed and the floodplains should be mapped on one-foot contour interval maps. Due to the tight budget, large area, and lack of manpower, it was not possible to delineate the floodplains to that degree of accuracy.

Playas were delineated by aerial photo interpretation, vegetative types, and field observations. Four large detention dams that hold between 55 and 152 acre-feet of water were also considered unsuitable.

Although the 1,800 acres delineated as floodplains are blocked out in 40-acre tracts, the actual floodplain usually represents a much smaller area. Actual floodplain boundaries have been digitized and maps are available for reviewing at the Socorro Field Office.

All of the 100-year occurrence floodplains in the high coal potential area can be mitigated because they do not represent a substantial threat to life or property.

3461.5(q)(l) Criterion No. 17

Federal lands which have been committed by the surface management agency to use as municipal watersheds shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the high coal potential area does not contain any municipal watersheds.

3461.5(r)(l) Criterion No. 18

Federal lands with national resource waters, as identified by states in their water quality management plans, and a buffer zone of Federal lands ¼ mile from the outer edge of the far banks of the water, shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the high coal potential area does not contain lands identified by the State of New Mexico as meeting this criterion.

3461.5(s)(1) Criterion No. 19

Federal lands identified by the surface management agency, in consultation with the State in which they are located, as alluvial valley floors according to the definition in 3400.0-5(a) of this title, the standards in 30 CFR Part 822, the final alluvial valley floor guidelines of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement when published, and approved State programs under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, where mining would interrupt, discontinue, or preclude farming, shall be considered unsuitable. Additionally, when mining Federal land outside an alluvial valley floor would materially damage the quantity or quality of water in surface or underground water systems that would supply alluvial valley floors, the land shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the high coal potential area does not contain lands identified as alluvial valley floors (30 CFR Chapter VII).

3461.5(t)(l) Criterion No. 20

Federal lands in a state to which is applicable a criterion (i) proposed by that state or Indian tribe located in the planning area, and (ii) adopted by rule making by the Secretary, shall be considered unsuitable.

At this time, the State of New Mexico has not proposed nor has the Secretary adopted any special or additional criterion other than those criterion presented in Parts 2, 3, and 4 of the New Mexico Coal Surface Mining Commission Rule 80-1 which corresponds with segments of the Federal 3461.1 regulations.

Multiple-Use Conflict Analysis

The multiple-resource use screens are intended to eliminate lands from further consideration for coal leasing if other resources on those lands are determined to be locally important or unique. In general, a multiple-use trade-off is appropriate when one land use (e.g., mining) would be likely to preclude or limit use of other valuable resources not otherwise covered by the 20 unsuitability criteria. The readjustments at this stage in the land use planning process are made to accommodate unique, site-specific resource values clearly superior to coal but which are not included in the unsuitability criteria. A prime recreation site or campground might be an example.

The multiple-use analysis weighs the effects of the additional multiple-use screens on the areas, which have passed the previously mentioned screens. The results of these analyses are summarized below. It should be noted that additional inventory for cultural resources, raptor nests, etc., could require the reapplication of multiple-use and unsuitability criteria screens at the coal activity planning stage.

Multiple-Use Screening Analysis

No. 1: Wetlands

Wetlands larger than one acre will be considered unacceptable.

Definition: BLM Manual 6740 defines wetlands as follows:

“Permanently wet or intermittently flooded areas where the water table (fresh, saline, or brackish) is at, near, or above the soil surface for extended intervals, where hydric wet soil conditions are normally exhibited, and where water depths generally do not exceed two meters. Vegetation is generally comprised of emergent water-loving forms (hydrophytes), which require at least a periodically saturated soil condition for growth and reproduction. In certain instances vegetation may be completely lacking. Marshes, shallows, swamps, muskegs, lake bogs, and wet meadows are examples of wetlands.”

These are poorly drained areas, as a rule having impervious soils (no substantial groundwater recharge). They may on occasion be in contact with the groundwater system, but for the most part they receive water from precipitation and overland runoff.

The above definition will be used for the multiple-use screen with the following modification. Marshes, shallows, swamps, and wet meadows less than one acre will not be considered under this definition. It will not include saltgrass flats associated with intermittent arroyos or small seasonally flooded livestock reservoirs that do not support emergent vegetation.

Analysis: There are no wetlands larger than one acre in the areas under consideration. This analysis is based on field inventories.

No. 2: Riparian Habitat

Riparian habitat will be considered unacceptable.

Definition: Manual 6740 defines riparian habitat as follows:

“A specialized form of wetland restricted to areas along, adjacent to, or contiguous with perennially and intermittently flowing rivers and streams, also, periodically flooded lake and reservoir shore areas, as well as lakes with stable water levels with characteristic vegetation. This habitat is transitional between true bottomland wetlands and upland terrestrial habitats and, while associated with water courses, may extend inland for considerable distances. Soils of the riparian habitat may not exhibit typical wet soil characteristics of other wetlands. If not, wet soil characteristics will exist close enough to the surface for the water to be used directly by vegetation. This vegetation may range from water-loving hydrophytes (such as pond weeds) through terrestrial forms (such as sycamores, cottonwoods, and willows).”

In these areas, soil and soil structure permit groundwater movement both vertically and horizontally. Groundwater recharge can occur.

For the purpose of the multiple-use screen the above definition will be used with the following condition: isolated cottonwood trees, tamarisk stands less than one acre, and desert arroyos with greasewood, rabbitbrush, or fourwing saltbush borders will not be considered as riparian habitat. They are more properly treated as special habitat features.

Analysis: Using the above definition, there is no riparian habitat in any of the areas under consideration. This analysis is based on field inventories.

No. 3: Proposed Threatened and Endangered Species

Habitat supporting populations or individuals of species proposed for Federal or State listing as threatened or endangered will be considered unacceptable.

Analysis: There are no proposed threatened or endangered species known to be within any of the areas under consideration. This analysis is based on field inventories and consultations with the USFWS and NMDGF.

No. 4: Federal Lands Contiguous to the National Trail System and the National Wilderness System

Federal lands within 0.5 mile of units of the National System of Trails, and the National Wilderness Preservation System, shall be considered unacceptable.

Analysis: There are no Federal land systems within 0.5 mile of any of the areas under consideration.

No. 5: Class II VRM Areas

Areas that contain VRM Class II objectives shall be considered unacceptable for surface coal mining.

Analysis: There are no areas under consideration that are managed under VRM Class II management objectives.

No. 6: Areas of Significant Recreation Use or Opportunity

Special Recreation Management Areas and areas that contain Recreation Opportunity Spectrum management objective for the primitive class shall be considered unacceptable for surface coal mining.

Analysis: There are no areas managed as Special Recreation Management Areas or Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Primitive class management objectives in the high coal potential area.

No. 7: Sole-Source Aquifers

An area formally designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a sole-source aquifer shall be considered unacceptable.

Analysis: The sole-source aquifer program under the Safe Drinking Water Act permits citizens to petition EPA for designation of an area as a sole-source aquifer if it is the principal water supply. If so designated, EPA reviews all federally assisted projects, which may affect the quality of groundwater in the sole-source aquifer.

There have been no sole-source aquifer designations in the high coal potential area under this program to date.

No. 8: Air Quality

Lands within 15 miles of air quality Class I Prevention of Significant Deterioration areas shall be considered unacceptable.

Analysis: There are no Class I Prevention of Significant Deterioration areas within or adjacent to the high coal potential area.

No. 9: Reserved Federal Lands

All Federal lands included in the following land systems or categories shall be considered unacceptable: Federal Aviation Administration facilities; all site withdrawals (administrative, school, etc.) for Federal agencies and leases acquired under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Analysis: There are no Federal lands within the high coal potential area under consideration which are reserved for Federal Aviation Administration facilities, site withdrawals for Federal agencies (administrative, school, etc.) or leases acquired under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

Exception: A lease may be issued and mining operations approved if, after consultation with the affected Federal agency or lessee, the surface management agency determines that the facility will not be adversely affected by all or certain stipulated methods of coal mining.

No. 10: Right-of-Way Windows or Corridors

Federal lands which have been committed by the surface management agency to use as rights-of-way windows or corridors shall be considered unacceptable.

Analysis: No Federal lands that have been designated or recommended for designation, as rights-of-way windows or corridors, are within the areas under consideration.

No. 11: Paleontological Resources

Any paleontological resources which are type localities for fauna that define regional or larger time-stratigraphic units, and special management areas set aside for their paleontological values, shall be considered unacceptable. However, coal mining can be allowed if the authorized officer (in consultation with affected Federal/State agencies) determines that mining activities will enhance and facilitate access and scientific evaluation of paleontological resources.

Analysis: This multiple-use screen does not apply to any areas under consideration with the high coal potential area.

No. 12: Cultural Resource Sites Eligible for Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places

All properties which have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and which are of exceptional complexity, or areas of properties which must be considered together to achieve adequate mitigation through data recovery, shall be considered unacceptable. This shall include areas that the surface managing agency determines, after consultation with the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, are necessary to protect the inherent values of the property that made it eligible for the National Register.

Prior to approval of surface-disturbing activities, Class III inventories will be conducted and subsequent mitigation of impacts will be required on all National Register eligible sites. Consultation between BLM, Office of Surface Management, and SHPO will occur to determine if newly recorded sites are eligible for inclusion in the National Register. If adequate mitigating measures for impacts to these site(s) cannot be developed, the sites and appropriate buffer zones will not be surface-mined or allowed to be disturbed by underground mining activities.

Analysis: This area has a high density of recorded and unrecorded cultural resource sites. Much of the high coal potential area has been inventoried for cultural resources, and much of the inventory related to coal extraction proposals. All surveyed areas show a high density of sites, and many of the sites have been determined eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register).

A large portion of the high coal potential area falls within the boundaries of the Zuni Salt Lake Sanctuary site, which has been determined eligible to the National Register. These areas were eliminated from further consideration for coal leasing.

For the remaining high coal potential area, a literature search was performed to determine if sites eligible to the National Register were present. The literature search was conducted on areas meeting all three of the following criteria:

1. Within boundaries of high coal potential coal areas
2. Federal mineral ownership
3. Outside the boundary of the Zuni Salt Lake Sanctuary site

A total of 181 sites were identified as having been recorded in the areas meeting the three criteria. Approximately two thirds were found to be eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register. These areas were eliminated from further consideration for coal leasing.

No. 13: Native American Areas of Cultural Significance

Federal lands containing specific sites that have been identified as sacred and essential to the practice of traditional Native American religion shall be considered as unacceptable. This shall also include any areas that the surface management agency determines, after consultation with the appropriate tribal representative, as necessary to protect the inherent values of the area and to ensure that the natural character of the area remains unaltered so it may continue to be used for prayer or other religious practices.

Analysis: An overview of Native American traditional use of the original SACA region (Kelly in Camilli et al. n.d.) has shown that this screen may apply to sites, localities, and linear features (trails). A large portion of the high coal potential area falls within the boundaries of the Zuni Salt Lake Sanctuary site, which has been determined eligible to the National Register. These areas were eliminated from further consideration for coal leasing.

FLUID MINERALS LEASING

Federal fluid minerals are made available for leasing through the Minerals Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, and the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970. The Minerals Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, provides the Secretary of the Interior with authority to issue leases on lands where the mineral rights are held by the Federal government. This authority has been delegated to the BLM State Directors. The BLM is required to determine (1) which lands are suitable and available for leasing and subsequent development and (2) how those leased lands will be managed. On lands administered or owned by an entity other than BLM (referred to as split estate), BLM's environmental objectives and constraints apply equally to these areas; however, such constraints are developed at the permit stage in consultation with the other surface-managing agency or surface owner. Wilderness study areas are closed to mineral leasing by the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

A lease is a contract that conveys to an operator the right to develop and produce fluid minerals for a specific period of time under certain agreed-upon terms and conditions. The issuance of a lease grants to the lessee exclusive rights to as much of the leased land as is needed to conduct exploratory drilling and development operations in the leasehold subject to stipulations attached to the lease; restrictions derived from specific nondiscretionary statutes; and reasonable measures as may be required by the surface-management agency to minimize adverse impacts on other resource values, land uses, or users.

Before consent can be given for leases to be issued by BLM, regulations require (1) verifying that leasing on specific lands is consistent with the land use plan; (2) ensuring that conditions of surface occupancy are properly included (as stipulations) in resulting leases; and (3) determining that operations and development could be allowed somewhere on each proposed lease except where a stipulation would prohibit all surface occupancy.

Standard Lease Terms and Conditions

Areas may be open to leasing with no specific management decisions defined in a resource management plan. However, these areas are subject to the lease terms and conditions as defined on the appropriate lease form (Form 3100-11, Offer to Lease and Lease for Oil and Gas; and Form 3200-24, Offer to Lease and Lease for Geothermal Resources). The forms include lease terms and conditions that address subjects such as bonding, rentals, royalties, inspections, and safety. Of particular interest for this discussion is Section 6, Conduct of Operations, of the lease form, which establishes the general and reasonable requirements for the protection of surface resources and is referred to as "standard lease terms and conditions." The Authorized Officer has the right to relocate proposed facilities, control timing of

operations, and impose other mitigation in accordance with Sections 2 and 6 of the standard oil and gas lease terms. Each proposed site would be investigated and, if site-specific conditions warrant more restrictive protection, such protective measures could be imposed through conditions of approval at the time of an application for permit to drill.

In addition, the standard lease terms and conditions specifically require that the lessee contact the lessor prior to disturbing the surface. They also specify that the lessee may be required to complete inventories or special studies in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, and other applicable laws.

Fluid Mineral Lease Stipulations

Constraints in the form of stipulations are conditions included in a lease when environmental and planning analyses have demonstrated that additional and more stringent environmental protection is needed. Stipulations are provisions that modify the standard lease rights and are made part of the lease. The operator would be expected to comply with the stipulations that are attached to a lease. Lands currently under lease would not be affected by the stipulations identified in this Resource Management Plan Revision/Environmental Impact Statement. New leases would be required to adhere to the stipulations as identified in the Resource Management Plan Revision upon its completion.

A number of stipulations for fluid minerals leasing are proposed for specific areas in the alternatives for this RMPR/EIS as follows:

S-CSU-C1 – Protection of Cultural Resources	S-CSU-Z – Protection of Zuni Salt Lake
S-CSU-C2 – Protection of Cultural Resources	S-NSO-V – Protection of Natural Resources
S-CSU-C3 – Protection of Cultural Resources	S-NSO-C – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Cultural Resources
S-CSU-C4 – Protection of Cultural Resources	S-NSO-R – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Special Recreation Areas
S-CSU-K – Potential Cave or Karst Occurrence Area	S-NSO-T&E – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Threatened or Endangered Species
S-CSU-P – Protection of Paleontological Resources	S-NSO-W – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Wildlife Resources
S-CSU-R – Protection of Riparian Areas	S-VRM-II – Protection of Visual Resource Management Class II Areas
S-CSU-S – Protection of Slopes and Fragile Soils	NM-5 – White Sands Missile Range Safety Evacuation Zone
S-CSU-V – Protection of Natural Values	NM-6 – Continental Divide Trail
S-CSU-W1 – Protection of Wildlife Resources	
S-CSU-W2 – Protection of Wildlife Projects	
S-CSU-W3 – Protection of Raptor and Prairie Dog Habitat	
S-CSU-W4 – Protection of Potential Northern Aplomado Falcon Habitat	

Additional information on the purpose of each stipulation and the type of conditions that would be applied to a lease are described below.

S-CSU-C1 – Protection of Cultural Resources

For the purpose of: Protection of highly significant and sensitive historic and prehistoric resources that might not be detected by means of standard Class III cultural resource surface inventory from direct and indirect effects of lease development.

Waiver: None

Exception: Requests for exception would be based on a case-by-case basis sensitivity evaluation and on available information regarding site-specific soil stability, site probability and any proposal for alternate forms of mitigation.

Modification: None

Justification: Nationally significant sites of both prehistoric and historic origin are located in the area. Many of these sites are not easily identified through standard Class III cultural resource inventory.

Stipulation: Access to the lease will be limited to routes designated in the approved permit for lease operations. Applications for surface disturbing aspects of lease development will be evaluated for potential proximity to sensitive nationally significant cultural resources (known and suspected) and could require expanded pre-field records search, subsurface testing and/or metal detector survey in addition to routine cultural resource surface inventory for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the costs of which will be borne by the lessee. This could result in extended time frames for processing authorizations for development activities.

All proposed surface-disturbing aspects of lease development will be located to avoid and/or protect the cultural resources present.

S-CSU-C2 – Protection of Cultural Resources

For the purpose of: Ensuring that highly sensitive subsurface sites of national significance are not destroyed because they lack surface manifestations.

Waiver: None

Exception: Requests for exception would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding site-specific soil stability, site probability, and proposals for alternate forms of mitigation.

Modification: None

Justification: Archaeological sites in this area are extremely significant, rare, and fragile. Standard compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA through Class III surface inventory is not sufficient to protect vulnerable resources of national significance. Subsurface testing is necessary to ensure that highly sensitive sites are not destroyed due to a lack of surface features and artifacts.

Stipulation: Access will be limited to designated routes. All surface-disturbing aspects of lease development will require subsurface testing in addition to cultural resource surface inventory for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

S-CSU-C3 – Protection of Cultural Resources

For the purpose of: Ensuring that highly sensitive sites of national significance are not destroyed.

Waiver: None

Exception: Requests for exception would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding site-specific soil stability, site probability, and proposals for alternate forms of mitigation.

Modification: None

Justification: Archaeological sites in this area are extremely significant, rare, and fragile. Standard compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA through Class III surface inventory is not sufficient to protect vulnerable resources of national significance. Subsurface testing is necessary to ensure that highly sensitive sites are not destroyed due to a lack of surface features and artifacts.

Stipulation: All drill sites will be located adjacent to designated routes. All surface-disturbing aspects of lease development will require subsurface testing in addition to cultural resource surface inventory for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

S-CSU-C4 – Protection of Cultural Resources

For the purpose of: Ensuring that highly sensitive sites of national significance are not destroyed.

Waiver: None

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Archaeological sites in this area are extremely significant, rare, and fragile. Standard compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA through Class III surface inventory is not sufficient to protect vulnerable resources of national significance.

Stipulation: All proposed surface-disturbing aspects of lease development may be moved to protect the cultural resources present.

S-CSU-K – Potential Cave or Karst Occurrence Area

For the purpose of: Protecting cave and karst resources.

Waiver: Waiver of this requirement will be considered for projects that enhance or protect renewable natural resource values, or when an approved plan of operations ensures the protection of cave and karst resources.

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Stipulating controlled surface use is deemed necessary based on the need to protect cave and karst resources in these areas.

Stipulation: All or portions of the lease are located in a potential cave or karst occurrence area. Within this area, cave or karst features such as sinkholes, passages, and large rooms may be encountered from the surface to a depth of as much as 2,000 feet, within areas ranging from a few acres to hundreds of acres. Due to the sensitive nature of the cave or karst systems of this area, special protective measures may be developed during environmental analyses and be required as part of approvals for drilling or other

operations on this lease. These measures could include changes in drilling operations, special casing and cementing programs, modifications in surface activities, or other reasonable measures to mitigate impacts to cave or karst values.

Surface disturbance will not be allowed within up to 200 meters of known cave entrances, passages or aspects of significant caves, or significant karst features.

S-CSU-P – Protection of Paleontological Resources

For the purpose of: Ensuring that sensitive paleontological sites of national significance are not destroyed.

Waiver: None

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Paleontological sites in this area are extremely significant, rare, and fragile.

Stipulation: A paleontological survey by a qualified paleontologist must be conducted prior to any surface-disturbing activities. All proposed surface-disturbing activities of lease development must be located to avoid and/or protect the paleontological resources present.

S-CSU-R – Protection of Riparian Areas

For the purpose of: Protection of riparian habitat for purposes of preventing further habitat fragmentation and loss of use of otherwise suitable/effective habitat.

Waiver: If circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, or in emergency situations or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity is of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat, exceptions or waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting.

Exception: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer if an approved plan of operations assures the protection of water, soil, and habitat resources.

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer if an approved plan of operations assures the protection of water, soil, and habitat resources.

Stipulation: Surface-disturbing or long-term noise producing activities which exceed a noise level of 75 A-weighted decibels (75dbA), measured at the perimeter of the 400-meter protective spatial buffer, will not be allowed within 400 meters of riparian areas (springs, seeps, tanks, rivers, streams, playas, canyon bottoms, and floodplains). If the 75dbA noise level is determined to not provide adequate protection from the auditory impact created by lease operations, a stricter level shall be applied prior to authorizing lease operations. The BLM Authorized Officer will work with lease holder on a case-by-case basis to achieve an acceptable level of noise mitigation. A more restrictive spatial buffer may be applied where the 400-meter spatial buffer has been documented to not provide adequate protection. Appropriate

modifications to the imposed restrictions will be made for the maintenance and operations of producing oil and gas wells.

S-CSU-S – Protection of Slopes and Fragile Soils

For the purpose: Protection of fragile soils and natural resources.

Waiver: None

Exception: Exceptions will be made if the operator can show that operations can be conducted without adversely affecting the protected resources.

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer, appropriate modifications to the imposed restrictions will be made for the maintenance and operations of producing oil and gas wells.

Stipulation: All or portions of the lease area contain slopes over 30 percent and/or fragile soils that require special protection to prevent further resource degradation. Surface disturbance will not be allowed on slopes over 30 percent. Occupancy upon areas containing fragile soils will be evaluated and special measures applied to prevent erosion of fragile soils.

S-CSU-V – Protection of Natural Values

For the purpose of: Protection of unique scenic and natural values from the direct and indirect impacts of lease development.

Waiver: Requests for waiver would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding the proposed activity or disturbance, possible mitigations, and considering the site-specific scenic and natural values.

Exception: Based on an individual case sensitivity evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Modification: None

Justification: The protection of the special scenic and natural values.

Stipulation: Access will be limited to routes designated in the approved permit for lease operations. Applications for surface-disturbing activities will be evaluated for their proximity to the mature yucca stands and for their short and long-term impacts to the special aesthetic and natural values of the dense stands of mature yuccas that dominate the desert scenery.

S-CSU-W1 – Protection of Wildlife Resources

For the purpose: Protection of a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern for wildlife resources.

Waiver: Upon request, if circumstances or relative resource values change or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity is of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in continued activity or permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or resources of concern, exceptions or waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting.

Exception: None

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer, appropriate modifications to the imposed restrictions will be made for the maintenance and operations of producing oil and gas wells.

Stipulation: All or portions of the lease area contain special wildlife habitat features that require special protection to prevent further degradation or damage. Applications for surface-disturbing or long-term noise producing activities, which exceed a noise level of 75dbA at the edge of the well pad, will be authorized only when lessee/operator demonstrates that the area is essential for operations and when the lessee/operator submits a satisfactory surface use and operations plan that provides protection for these special resource values. If the 75dbA noise level is determined to not provide adequate protection from the auditory impact created by lease operations, a stricter level shall be applied as a condition of approval for lease operations. The BLM Authorized Officer will work with the lease holder on a case-by-case basis to achieve an acceptable level of noise mitigation.

S-CSU-W2 – Protection of Wildlife Habitat Projects

For the purpose of: Protection of wildlife habitat enhancement projects for purposes of preventing further habitat fragmentation and loss of use of otherwise suitable/effective habitat.

Waiver: If circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, or in emergency situations or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity is of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat, exceptions or waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting.

Exception: None

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Stipulation: Surface-disturbing or long-term noise producing activities which exceed a noise level of 75dbA, measured at the perimeter of the 400-meter protective spatial buffer, will not be allowed within 400 meters of existing or planned wildlife habitat improvement projects. If the 75dbA noise level is determined to not provide adequate protection from the auditory impact created by lease operations, a stricter level shall be applied as a condition of approval for lease operations. A more restrictive spatial buffer may be applied where the 400-meter spatial buffer has been documented to not provide adequate protection. Use and occupancy within the 400-meter spatial buffer will be authorized only when lessee/operator demonstrates that the area is essential for operations and when the lessee/operator submits a satisfactory surface use and operations plan, which adequately protects resources of concern. This requirement will be considered for a waiver with appropriate off-site mitigation, if the proposed activity is of short duration (e.g., habitat enhancement project, fences, pipelines), and will not result in continued activity in proximity to the habitat project, as determined by the Authorized Officer.

Appropriate modifications to the imposed restrictions will be made for the maintenance and operations of producing oil and gas wells.

S-CSU-W3 – Protection of Raptor and Prairie Dog Habitat

For the purpose of: Protection of raptor and prairie dog habitat.

Waiver: Waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting in the following situations: relative resource values change, the lessee

demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, in emergency situations, or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity are of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat.

Exception: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Stipulation: Prior to survey/flagging locations for pads, routes for roads, and any other preliminary activity, the project area will be surveyed for raptor nests. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer. All raptor nests, bald eagle wintering areas, and prairie dog colonies, will be avoided by the distances and seasonal periods listed below.

Distance:

- Eagle – 0.5 mile, February 1-July 15
- Prairie Falcon – 0.5 mile, March 1-August 1
- Ferruginous Hawk – 0.5 mile, February 1-July 15
- Aplomado Falcon – 0.5 mile, January 1-July 31
- Gunnison Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile, April 1-September 15
- Black Tailed Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile, January 1-June 15
- All other raptor species – 0.25 mile, during observed nest establishment through fledgling

Long-term surface use activities will not be allowed within the species-specific spatial buffer zone of active nests or occupied prairie dog towns listed above. Short-term activities will be avoided within the species-specific spatial buffer zones during the dates listed above. All other raptor species nests will be avoided by the spatial buffer zone only during the period listed above, regardless of the duration of the activity. Before surface use activities may commence a raptor and prairie dog survey must be completed.

A short-term activity is defined as an activity, which would begin outside of a given breeding season and end prior to initiation of a given breeding season. A long-term activity is defined as an activity which would continue into or beyond a given nesting/breeding season. An active nest is defined as any nest that has been occupied in the last seven years. A nest will be determined active or inactive by the Authorized Officer.

S-CSU-W4 – Protection of Potential Northern Aplomado Falcon Habitat

For the purpose of: Habitat protection for a Federally listed endangered species.

Waiver: Waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting in the following situations: relative resource values change, the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, in emergency situations, or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity are of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat.

Exception: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Modification: Based on a site-specific evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Stipulation: Surface use or occupancy is subject to the following special operating constraints in areas identified as having habitat potential for northern aplomado falcons. The lease operator is required to submit a Plan of Development for the entire leasehold prior to commencing drilling activity. Requests for exceptions or changes to the Plan of Development are not allowed without approval by the BLM authorized officer. Prior to surveying/flagging locations for pads, routes for roads, and other preliminary activities, a protocol northern aplomado falcon survey must be completed. In areas determined to have potential habitat, specialized surface use and occupancy requirements will be applied as conditions of approval for all surface-disturbing activities, including preliminary investigations.

S-CSU-Z – Protection of Zuni Salt Lake

For the purpose of: To protect the aquifers that feed Zuni Salt Lake.

Waiver: None

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Protection of Zuni Salt Lake and other significant sites and resources in the area.

Stipulation: No diversions from the Moreno Hill, and other underlying aquifers, without re-injection and with the following conditions to protect the hydrologic balance and chemistry of the Zuni Salt Lake:

1. Define disposal locations to mitigate all effects on the Zuni Salt Lake.
2. Produced water must be re-injected into the same aquifer, and water quality must be compatible with the injection interval.
3. Produced water shall be returned by vacuum.

S-NSO-V – Protection of Natural Resources

As described below, all or a portion of the lease contains natural resource values of concern requiring extraordinary protection. No surface occupancy is deemed necessary because standard mitigation measures and best management practices are not adequate to protect these significant, rare and/or fragile resources. It is the intention of the lessor that this lease be developed by directional drilling from or prorationing with adjacent locations.

For the purpose of: Protection of highly sensitive natural resource values from direct and indirect impacts of lease development.

Waiver: If circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade resource values, a waiver will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting. Requests for waiver will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding the proposed activity or disturbance, possible alternate forms of mitigation and consideration of the site-specific natural resource values.

Exception: No exceptions; see waiver criteria.

Modification: None

S-NSO-C – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Cultural Resources

For the purpose of: Protection of highly sensitive cultural resource sites from direct and indirect impacts of lease development, including increased access and erosion.

Waiver: Requests for waiver would be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding site-specific soil stability, site probability, and proposals for alternate forms of mitigation.

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Stipulating no surface occupancy is deemed necessary to protect archaeological sites which are extremely significant, rare, and fragile. Standard compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA through Class III surface inventory is not sufficient to protect vulnerable resources of national significance.

S-NSO-R – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Special Recreation Areas

For the purpose of: Protection of a high value recreation site and activity area from direct and indirect impacts of lease development.

Waiver: Requests for waiver will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on available information regarding the proposed activity or disturbance, possible mitigation and considering the site-specific scenic, natural, recreational, and cultural values.

Exception: Based on an individual case sensitivity evaluation by the Authorized Officer.

Modification: None

Justification: The protection of the special scenic, natural, recreational, and cultural values and activities inherent in the designated sites.

S-NSO-T&E – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Threatened or Endangered Species

For the purpose of: Habitat protection of listed threatened plants, by the USFWS, under the Endangered Species Act and nominated by the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the Nature Conservancy for special protection and management.

Waiver: If circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, or in emergency situations or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity is of short duration, such as a habitat or range improvement project, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat, exceptions or waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting.

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: The projection of threatened plants.

S-NSO-W – No Surface Occupancy to Protect Wildlife Resources

For the purpose of: Protection of wildlife habitat and other resources of concern.

Waiver: If circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that the operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts, or in emergency situations or if the disturbance or impacts associated with the proposed activity is of short duration, and will not result in permanent adverse impacts to the landscape or degrade wildlife habitat, exceptions or waivers will be considered with appropriate mitigation, as determined by the Authorized Officer at the time of permitting.

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Protection of wildlife habitat and other resources of concern.

S-VRM-II – Protection of Visual Resource Management Class II Areas

For the purpose of: To minimize contrasts to the characteristic landscape of each area.

Waiver: None

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: Stipulating controlled surface use is deemed necessary based on the need to protect visual resources in these areas. The objectives for VRM Class II areas are to manage activities so that the changes in any of the basic visual elements (form, line, color, and texture) are not evident in the landscape. A contrast may be seen but should not attract attention.

Stipulation: To meet the VRM objectives described below, and upon determinations made by the BLM Authorized Officer, new disturbance will be minimized as follows:

1. Painting of facilities in accordance with Notice to Lessees NM-87-1 "Painting of Oil Field Facilities" shall be required to meet VRM objectives.
2. Proposed disturbances may be moved distances greater than 200 meters to meet VRM Class II objectives.
3. Low-profile facilities may be required to reduce visual impacts.
4. Visual simulations will be required as part of the surface use plan for lease operations in sensitive view sheds such as Class II areas along scenic highways, trails, and back country byways.

NM-5 – White Sands Missile Range Safety Evacuation Zone

For the purpose of: Providing notice to lessees that they may be required to periodically evacuate this area when White Sands Missile Range conducts missile firings.

Waiver: None

Exception: None

Modification: None

Justification: To ensure that the lessee is aware that White Sands Missile Range conducts testing of missiles during which times White Sands Missile Range requires that the area be evacuated. Closing the area to leasing or attaching a stipulation to this lease is deemed overly restrictive since the area is viable for fluid minerals development during other times.

Stipulation: Prior to beginning exploration activities, the lessee must contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Albuquerque and the Master Planning Branch at White Sands Missile Range to be advised of terms of the safety evacuation agreement and missile-firing schedules.

Specific locations of the White Sands Missile Range Safety Evacuation Zone should be verified in the Socorro Field Office.

NM-6 – Continental Divide Trail

No occupancy or other surface-disturbance will be allowed within 1,000 feet of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Treadway. This distance may be modified when specifically approved in writing by the Socorro Field Office, BLM.

Specialized Surface Occupancy Requirements for Northern Aplomado Falcon Potential Habitat

For the purpose of: Protecting grassland habitat and associated special status species of wildlife through improved planning for future oil and gas development on a unit.

Requirement: In areas of potential northern aplomado falcon habitat that are open to leasing with a unitization requirement, new lessees form exploratory units prior to commencing drilling activity. This protection measure would allow the BLM to manage the surface in an orderly way and control the rate of reservoir development. The BLM has the authority to approve Unit Agreements, establish the rate of exploration and development, approve the tract allocation formula, and terminate units that cease production (or where production was never established). A simple definition of unitization is the operation of multiple leases as a single lease under a single operator. Unitization would result in less surface disturbance since wells would be drilled in the most favorable locations without regard for spacing, and the operator and BLM would establish corridors for access roads and pipelines, eliminating the need for redundant facilities. Lessee benefits include that individual leases could be extended beyond their primary term without actual production, as long as there is production on the unit.

WITHDRAWALS FROM MINERAL ENTRY

Table D-1 displays locations that have been withdrawn from location or entry under the mining laws.

**TABLE I-1
WITHDRAWALS FROM MINERAL ENTRY**

Serial Number	Withdrawn	Geographic Name	Location (NMPM)	Type of Withdrawal	Segregation	Acres
NMNM095102	10/19/1999	Datil Well	T. 2 S., R. 10 W., sec 10, sec 11.	Recreational Purpose	Locatable Minerals All surface	680
NMNM0038148	08/05/1960	Middle Rio Grande Project	T. 3 S., R. 1 E., sec 31, lot 50; T. 4 S., R. 1 E., sec 5, Eastern Most 1/5 POR L28; lots 26, 27, 33, 36, 37; sec 8, lot 54; sec 17, lot 19; sec 21, lots 12-14, 17, 18; sec 28, lots 18, 21; sec 33 lots 13, 14.	Reclamation	Locatable Minerals All surface	97,645
NMNM0013651	07/08/1955	White Sands Missile Range	T. 6 S., R. 7 E., Sec 6, lot 5 that portion south and west of ROW of US HWY 380; T. 6 S., R. 8 E., Sec 18, that portion south and west of ROW of US HWY 380; Sec 20, that portion south and west of ROW of US HWY 380, Sec 28, that portion south and west of ROW of US HWY 380.	Department of Army	All Minerals All Surface	310.00
NMNM095103	01/29/1999	Ladron Mountain ACEC	T. 2 N., R. 2 W., Sec 2 lots 1-8, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$; Sec 32, lots 1-4, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$; T. 3 N., R. 2 W., Sec 16, Sec 32, Sec 36, T. 2 N., R. 3 W., Sec 2, lot 4, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$; T. 2 N., R. 3 W., Sec 36, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$; T. 3 N., R. 3 W., Sec 36, N $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.	BLM special Designation	Locatable Minerals All Surface	4,556.6

Serial Number	Withdrawn	Geographic Name	Location (NMPPM)	Type of Withdrawal	Segregation	Acres
NMNM095104	03/25/1999		T. 5 S., R. 3 W., Sec 16, lots 5-8, N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$; Sec 21, Sec 28, Sec 29, Sec 32; T. 6 S., R. 3 W., Sec 4, lots 3,4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec 9, W $\frac{1}{2}$, Sec 15, W $\frac{1}{2}$, Sec 16, Sec 22, E $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$; T. 5 S., R. 4 W., Sec 25, E $\frac{1}{2}$. T. 1 N., R. 11 W., Sec 6, lot 7, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.	BLM Special Designation	Locatable Minerals All Surface	5,607.520
NMNM095118	10/09/2001	Sawtooth ACEC		BLM Miscellaneous	Locatable Minerals All Surface	116,120
NMNM08384	06/01/1995	The Box	T. 3 S., R. 1 W., Sec 31, lot 18.	BLM Miscellaneous	EXC Minerals All Surface	39,950

Appendix J

Off-highway Vehicle Areas and Route Designations





APPENDIX J

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE AREAS AND ROUTE DESIGNATIONS

In 1972, the President issued Executive Order 11644 requiring each Federal agency to designate “areas and trails” for off-road vehicle use or restriction and to develop regulations implementing this executive order. The Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 8340) established management areas as open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicle use.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) designations are determined through a comprehensive land use planning process, which serves as an adaptive and flexible approach to the management of all activities on public lands. As circumstances and conditions have changed over the past several decades, the BLM has made a concerted effort to focus the agency’s resources in the development of land use plans by seeking additional funding and staff to address issues associated with the increased population growth near the public lands. OHV designations are a major component of all future planning efforts.

In addition, guidance in BLM Manual H-1601, Appendix C directs the BLM offices to delineate travel management areas, designate OHV management areas and include route designations, “where practical.” The Manual further states, “If it is not practical to define or delineate the travel management network during the land use planning process, a preliminary network must be identified and a process established to select a final travel management network.”

Alternatives proposed in this Resource Management Plan Revision (RMPR) include revised OHV area designations and route designations within 12 of the 13 wilderness study areas (WSAs) (see Chapter 2 and Tables J-2 through J-13). No routes have been identified for the Devil’s Reach WSA under any alternative.

The following appendix provides definitions of OHV area designations and associated terms, a summary of the route inventory and designation process within WSAs, and the alternative route designations.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of the BLM’s OHV designations and associated terms are listed below. OHV designations are administrative, allowing management flexibility in response to changes in the environment. All public land is designated as “open,” “limited,” or “closed” to motorized vehicles in each field office’s Resource Management Plan (RMP) or travel and transportation management plan. The following terms are defined as stated in 43 CFR 8340.0-5.

- **Off-highway vehicle** – any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any non-amphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies. OHV use is subject to operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in 43 CFR 8341 and 8342.
- **Open area designation** – any area where all types of vehicle use are permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in 43 CFR 8341 and 8342. Open designations generally include areas where there are no compelling resource protection needs, use conflicts, or public safety issues that would warrant limiting OHV use.

- **Closed area designation** – an area where OHV use is prohibited. Closures may be necessary to protect resources, ensure visitor safety, or reduce use conflicts. Use of OHVs in closed areas may be allowed for certain reasons; however, such use shall be made only with the approval of the Authorized Officer.
- **Limited area designation** – an area restricted at certain times in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use. These restrictions may be of any type, but can generally be accommodated within the following categories: number of vehicles, types of vehicles, time or season of vehicle use, permitted or licensed use only, use on existing roads and trails, use on designated roads and trails, and other restrictions. Limitations may be used to meet specific resource management objectives, protect resources, or public safety.
- **Cross-country travel** – wheeled, motorized travel by any vehicle (recreational or other), off of roads and trails. It is difficult to provide one definition of motorized wheeled cross-country travel and have that definition fit all the situations that might occur. Roads and trails appear differently to individuals because of the variety of terrain, vegetation, and soil type found in the Planning Area.

Motorized travel is considered cross-country when:

- The passage of motorized vehicles depresses undisturbed ground and crushes vegetation.
- The motorized vehicle maximum width (the distance from the outside of the left tire to the outside of the right tire or maximum tire width for motorcycles) does not easily fit the road or trail profile. However, an all-terrain vehicle traveling within a two-track route established by a pickup truck is not considered cross-country travel.
- Motorized vehicles use livestock and game trails, unless the trails are clearly evident, or continuous single-track routes used by motorcycles over a period of years.

Motorized travel is not considered cross-country when:

- Motorized vehicles use constructed roads that are maintained by the oil and gas industry and/or the BLM, unless specifically closed to use through signing and/or gates. Constructed roads are often characterized by a road prism with cut and fill slopes.
- Motorized vehicles use trails specifically designated for the vehicle being used.
- Motorized vehicles use clearly evident two-track and single-track routes with regular use and continuous passage of motorized vehicles over a period of years. A route is a track where perennial vegetation is devoid or scarce, or where wheel tracks are continuous depressions in the ground, evident to the casual observer, but are vegetated. While unauthorized routes are not part of the inventory, they are described as post-WSA routes on Tables J-2 through J-13.

The entire route must meet the above specifications. Newly created routes should be easily identified as not meeting the specifications because many portions would not show signs of regular and continuous passage of motorized vehicles and many areas would still be fully vegetated with no wheel depressions. This definition does have some ambiguity that will continue to exist until formal designation of routes, trails, and areas within the entire Planning Area is completed. This definition only applies to cross-country travel in the dispersed area and not to cross-country travel within special management areas. A special management area may have its own management plan that defines regulations for cross-country travel within its boundaries.

ROUTE DESIGNATION AND CLOSURE CRITERIA

Route Designation Criteria

The following criteria apply to route designations within WSAs in the Socorro Field Office. Designation of routes within WSAs must be in compliance with the Interim Policy and Management Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (1995).

Designation criteria are listed in 43 CFR 8342.1, a, b, c and d as follows:

- (a) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, air or other resources of the public lands, and to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability.
- (b) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Special attention will be given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats.
- (c) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.
- (d) Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated wilderness areas or primitive areas. Areas and trails shall be located in natural areas only if the authorized officer determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, esthetic, scenic, or other values for which such areas are established.

Other designation considerations include:

- Routes that provide access to existing rights such as private land.
- Routes that provide known access needs for the maintenance of authorized range improvements (pre-Federal Land Policy and Management Act [FLPMA]) or other authorized administrative activities.
- Routes that provide access for unique recreational experiences and/or commercial activities (primarily outfitting).
- Routes previously closed in the 1989 Socorro RMP.

Route Closure Criteria

Route closure criteria include the following:

- Routes causing unacceptable resource damage, erosion (i.e.: wash outs, ruts, detours).
- Routes through soils which are easily eroded or highly susceptible to resource damage.
- Multiple or parallel routes in the same area (route proliferation).
- Routes that are naturally re-vegetating and or no longer receiving motorized use.
- Routes that have a high potential to negatively affect threatened or endangered or sensitive wildlife species or limited and important wildlife habitat.

- Routes that have a high potential to encourage harassment or disruption to wildlife or wild horses.
- Vehicle routes (ways) which did not exist when the area was designated a WSA in 1980 (refer to 2002 Review of 1980 Ways Inventory of WSA in the Socorro Field Office).
- Routes which may adversely affect areas of cultural or religious concern for Native Americans.
- Routes which may adversely affect sites which may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS ROUTE INVENTORY

Completing OHV route designations within the 13 WSAs (Table J-1) is an important goal in the effort to revise the Socorro Field Office 1989 RMP. BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook H-16011-1 (Appendix C, p 18) directs Field Offices that "[at] a minimum, the travel management area designation for wilderness study areas (WSAs) must be limited to ways and trails existing at the time the area became a WSA...Existing roads, ways and trails must be fully documented and mapped...In addition, future designations may be made for a WSA if it is released from study." Without formal OHV route designations through the land use planning process, the Socorro Field Office would be unable to effectively carry out or enforce motorized OHV regulation and policy within its WSAs.

TABLE J-1 WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS WITHIN SOCORRO FIELD OFFICE	
Antelope	Mesita Blanca
Continental Divide	Presilla
Devil's Backbone	Sierra de Las Cañas
Devil's Reach	Sierra Ladrones
Eagle Peak	Stallion
Horse Mountain	Veranito
Jornada del Muerto	

The Socorro Field Office completed "Vehicular Routes [Ways]" inventories for its 13 WSAs in 1980. Completing a formal designation of vehicle routes in the Socorro Field Office WSAs for the RMPR required a baseline inventory of those routes (also referred to as "ways") that existed at the time of inventory (1980) and/or prior to the enactment of FLPMA (October 21, 1976). While the 1980 inventory is generally a good representation of what existed on the ground at the time, the maps pre-date current mapping technology and standards. In some cases, the 1980 "Vehicular Route" maps are inaccurate. For example, some of the legal descriptions (in text) of "Vehicle Access Routes" do not correspond to mapped "Vehicular Routes." In other instances, routes mapped in the 1980 inventory appear misplaced and/or drawn incorrectly.

To facilitate the goal of route-by-route OHV designations in the WSAs, and to improve the integrity of the baseline data used in the planning process, this review was undertaken to integrate the old WSA route inventory into the geographic information system (GIS). The following discussion outlines the interpretive process and methodology used to make necessary changes and/or corrections in the 1980 inventory.

Data Used

The following sources of information were reviewed during the route inventory. Much of these data has been verified on the ground with global positioning system (GPS) technology. Although incomplete, these data are the best attempt (to date) at a comprehensive Field Office inventory of routes that are

suitable for the gamut of motorized vehicle use. A large percentage of the access routes within the 13 WSAs have been accurately recorded using the GPS over the past 5 to 10 years.

- 1) “Vehicular Routes” Maps, Intensive Wilderness Inventory Report (IWIR), March 1980: These maps were intended as a complete inventory of existing WSA routes, or Ways (pre-FLPMA). Each map was hand drawn at a scale of ½ inch = 1 mile. The maps are crude, black and white, and show no features other than township and range, the WSA boundary, and approximate locations of routes. Upon careful inspection, the path and length of some of the routes are incorrectly drawn and located on the map. In a few other instances, mapped routes do not correspond to any kind of verifiable intrusion or disturbance when researched against the historical record.
- 2) “Vehicle Access Routes” Descriptions, IWIR, March, 1980: Each of the mapped routes identified above correspond to written descriptions in the IWIR. These written descriptions include the approximate length of the route along with a legal description. Routes are sometimes described as “two track,” “substantially unnoticeable,” and “jeep trail.” In some cases, these descriptions do not correspond to the location of the mapped route(s).
- 3) Assorted working maps and descriptive text found in the IWIR, March 1980: There are several maps and written inventory included in the 1980 IWIR – maps that describe photo-points, maps that identify intrusions (other than vehicle routes), county highway maps “Initial Wilderness Inventory Recommendations [maps],” photocopied U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), 7.5 Minute Series, and maps found in the Las Cruces District, Final Wilderness Inventory Report, Vol. II.” The text in the Final Wilderness Inventory Report attempted to quantify the amount of vehicular route(s) in each WSA.
- 4) 1976 Aerial Photographs: This 1976 flight covers only the Continental Divide and Horse Peak WSAs. Most of this flight was developed in black and white, and a small portion in color. The scale is poor but the resolution is generally good. Although the coverage is limited, these photos were helpful in both confirming and eliminating some of the routes identified in the 1980 inventory.
- 5) Socorro Field Office Digitized Transportation, Road and Trail Inventory: These data are an ongoing Field Office inventory of both improved and unimproved roads and trails throughout the Socorro Field Office. Transportation system information has been digitized for each 1:250,000 topographic map (7.5 minute).

Data Interpretation and Review

Using the 12 vehicular routes maps included in the 1980 IWIR as baseline data, all routes were reviewed in an effort to match/confirm their existence with at least one other data set, historical or current. Most of the routes in the 1980 inventory were easily authenticated and are included in the Socorro Field Office GIS Database. Data includes both GPS information as well as routes digitized off USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps.

In a few circumstances where mapped vehicular routes did not correspond to the legal descriptions in vehicle access routes, and where there was reasonable evidence that the intended location of the route was nearby, the route was relocated and digitized.

In other circumstances, mapped vehicle access routes did not clearly correspond to any route(s) that have been mapped or photographed either on or before the 1980 IWIR. Under these circumstances, available

spatial data were interpreted to discover nearby routes bearing a meaningful resemblance in shape and length to the IWIR mapped route(s). These routes were also relocated and digitized.

In review of the entire record, current conditions on the ground can and do vary from the 1980 inventory. Some routes have disappeared or re-vegetated (lack of use), and new routes have appeared as a result of unauthorized use, but are not included in this inventory.

Photocopies of all maps, inventory, text, and aerial photographs used in this review can be found in the notebook at the Socorro Field Office of the BLM. Additionally, the OHV Baseline Report, prepared on August 2003, also describes OHV and WSA information which will be carried forward for use in the Socorro RMPR.

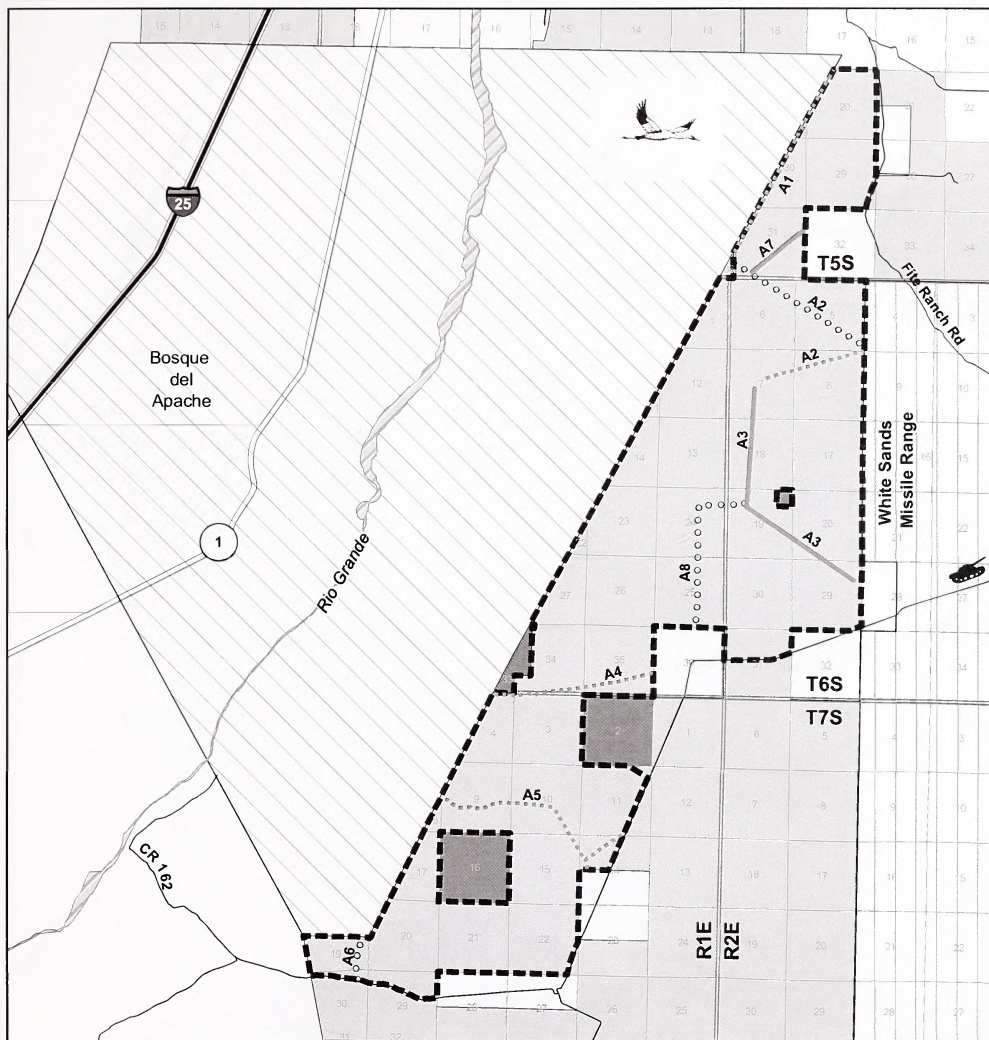
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA ROUTE DESIGNATIONS

Tables J-2 through J-13 detail miles of route designations by alternative within 12 of the 13 WSAs. Maps of alternative route designations follow each of the tables. No routes have been identified for the Devil's Reach WSA under any alternative.

TABLE J-2

**MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
ANTELOPE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	A1 (3 miles) A2 (1½ miles) A4 (2½ miles) A5 (3 miles)	A4 (2½ miles) A5 (1½ miles)		A1 (3 miles) A2 (½ mile) A4 (2½ miles) A5 (3 miles)
Total	10	4	0	9
Closed (rehabilitate)	*A3 *A7	A2 (2 miles) A3 (3½ miles) A5 (1½ miles) A6 (½ mile) A7 (1 mile) A8 (2 miles)	A2 (2 miles) A3 (3½ miles) A5 (3 miles) A6 (½ mile) A7 (1 mile) A8 (2 miles)	A2 (2 miles) A3 (3 ½ mile) A6 (½ mile) A7 (1 mile) A8 (2 miles)
Total	*4½	10½	12	9
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		A1 (3 miles) A2 (1½ miles)	A1 (3 miles) A2 (1½ miles) A4 (2½ miles)	
Total	0	4½	7	0
Post WSA Route	A2 (2 miles) A3 (3½ miles) A6 (½ mile) A7 (1 mile) A8 (2 miles)			
Total	9	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- o o o o Post WSA Route
- Closed Routes

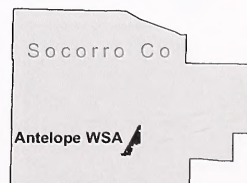
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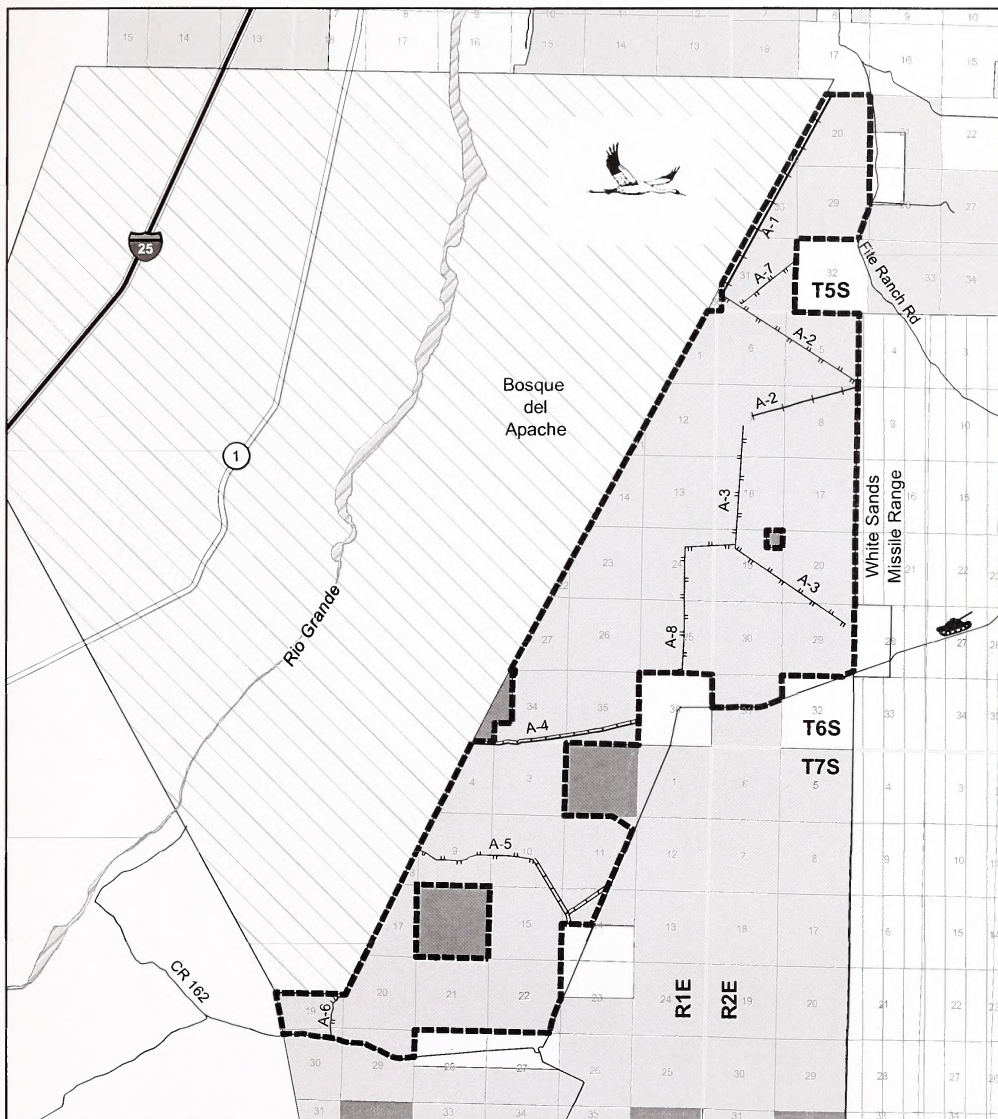
- BLM
- DOD
- FWS
- Private
- State

ANTELOPE WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close (Permit)
- +--- Close (Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- DOD
- FWS
- Private
- State

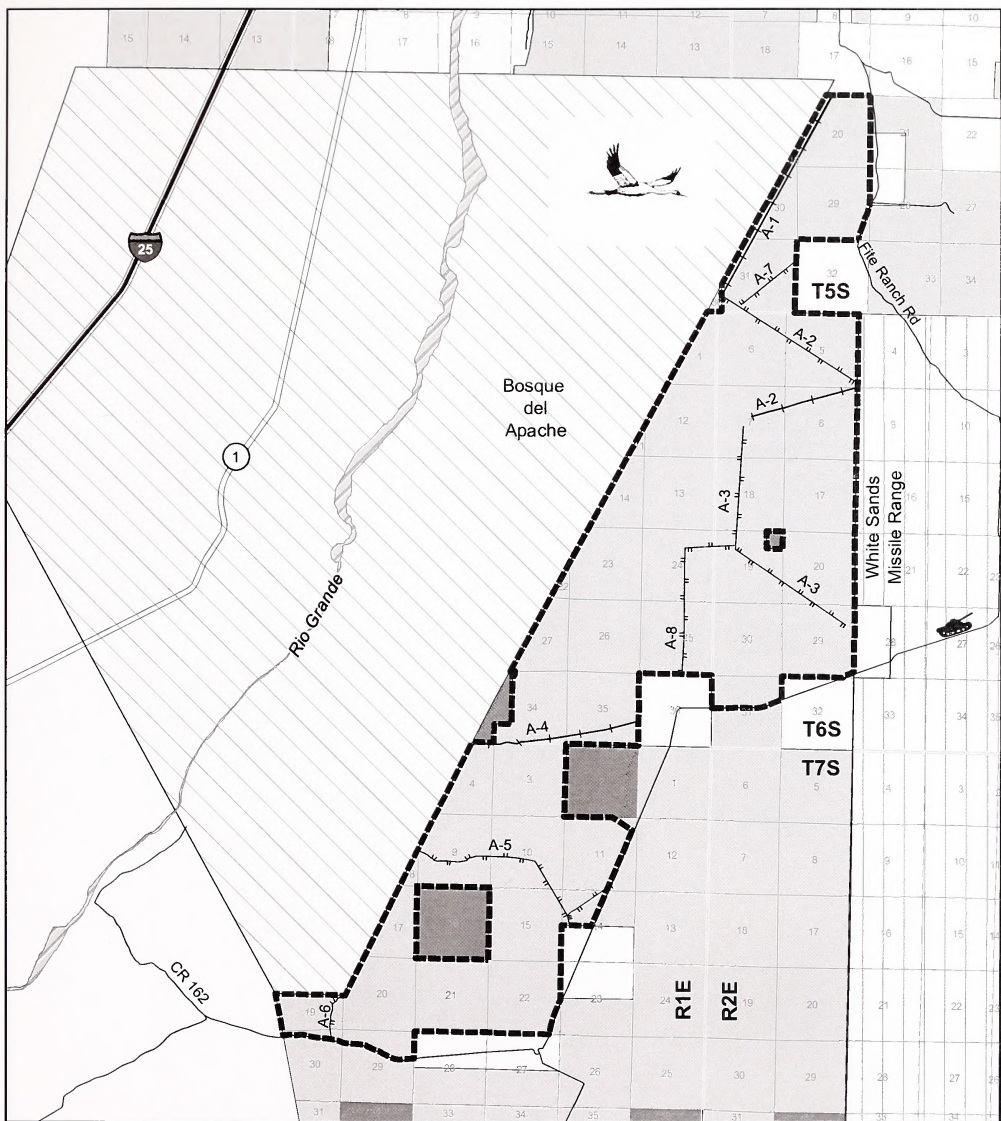
0 1 2 4 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN ANTELOPE WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close (Permit)
- Close (Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- DOD
- FWS
- Private
- State

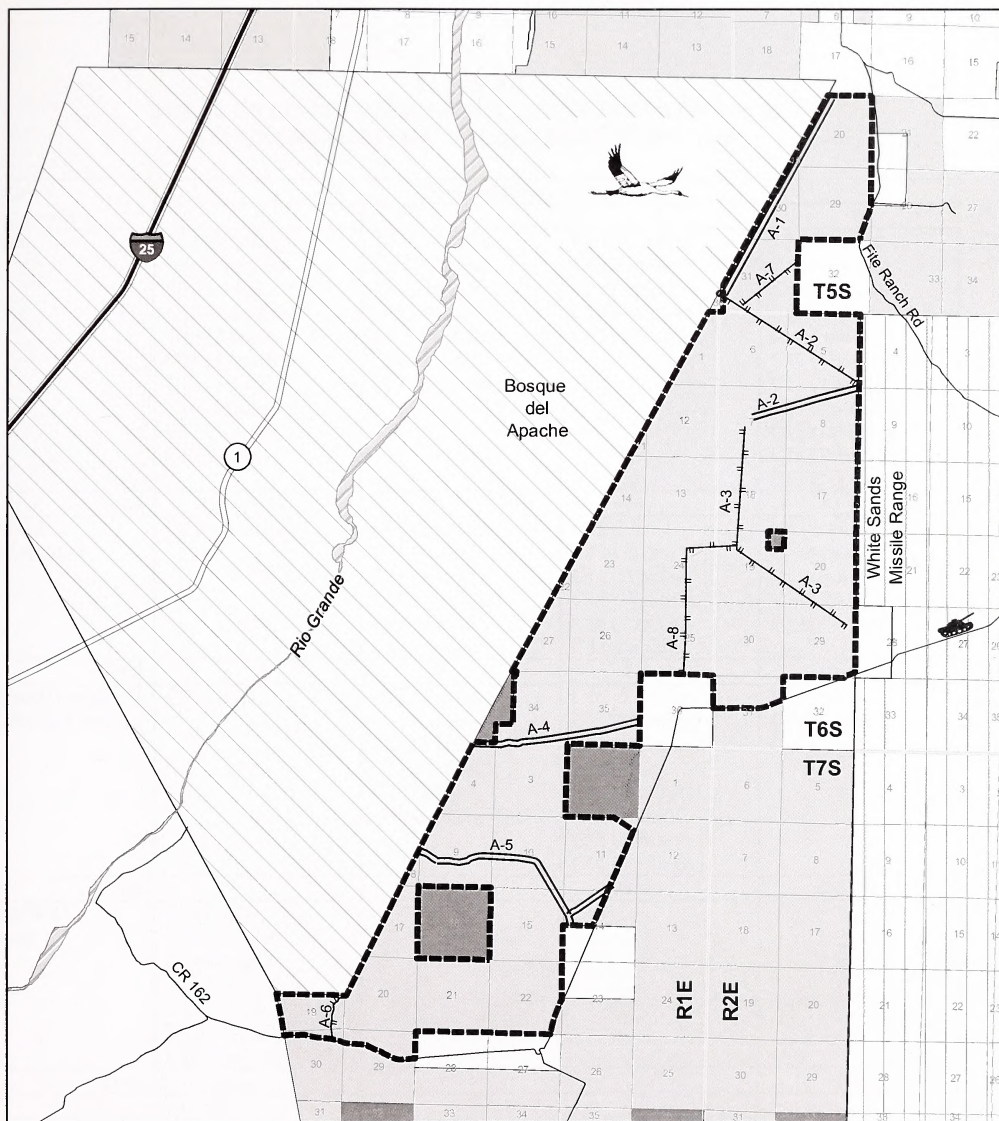
0 1 2 4 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN ANTELOPE WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close (Permit)
- Close (Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- DOD
- FWS
- Private
- State



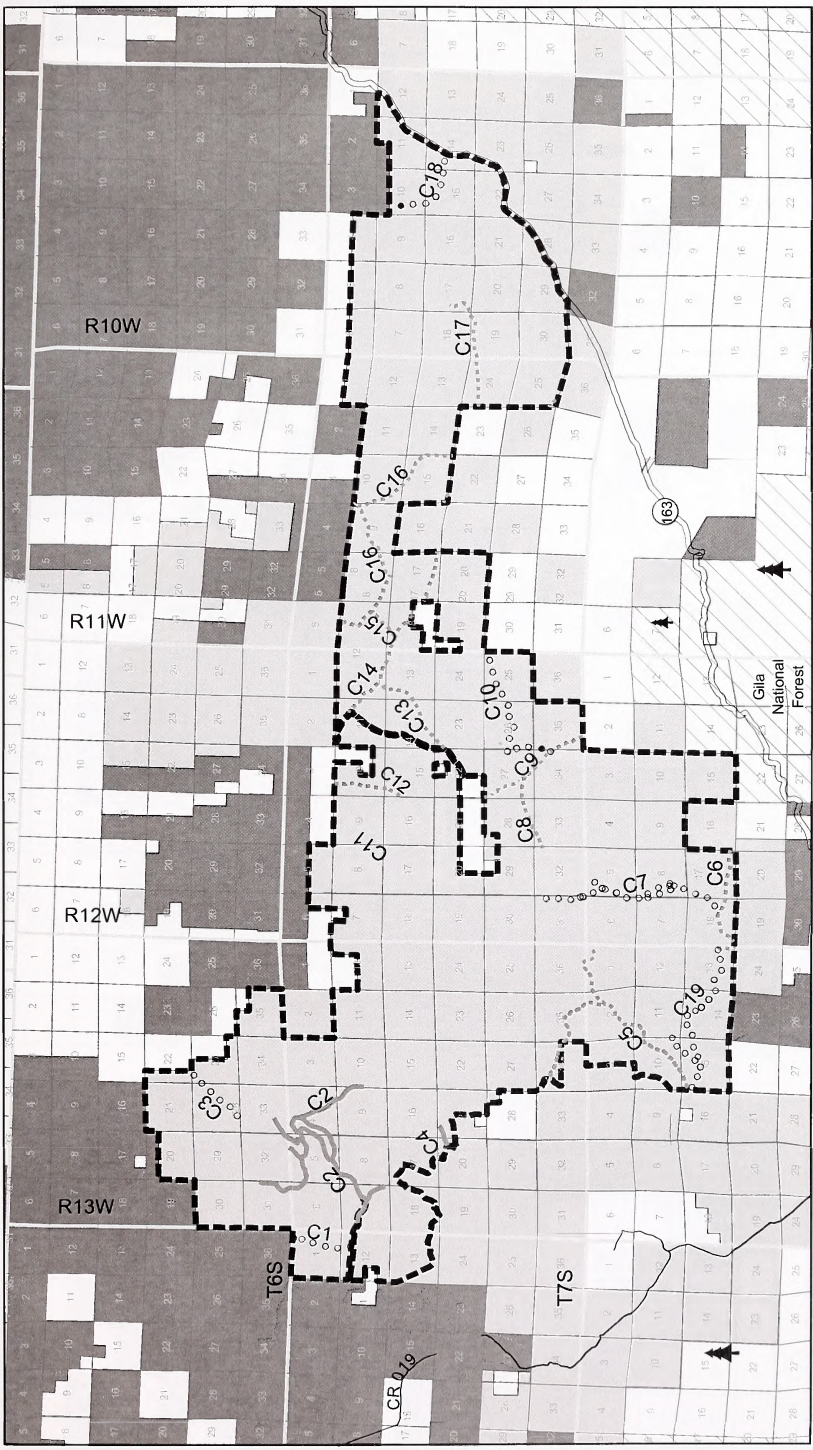
ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN ANTELOPE WSA ALTERNATIVE D

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data



**TABLE J-3
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	C5 (5½ miles) C6 (2½ miles) C9 (2 miles) C12 (1½ miles) C13 (2 miles) C14 (4½ miles) C15 (1½ miles) C16 (5 miles) C17 (2 ½ miles) C8 (2 miles)	C5 (5½ miles) C6 (2½ miles) C9 (2 miles) C14 (4½ miles) C15 (1½ miles) C16 (5 miles) C17 (2½ miles)	C5 (5½ miles) C6 (2½ miles) C9 (2 miles) C14 (4½ miles) C15 (1½ miles)	C2 (11 miles) C5 (5½ miles) C6 (2½ miles) C8 (2 miles) C9 (2 miles) C12 (1½ miles) C13 (2 miles) C14 (4½ miles) C15 (1½ miles) C16 (5 miles) C17 (2½ miles)
Total	29	23½	16	40
Closed (rehabilitate)	C4 (½ mile)	C13 (2 miles) C7 (4 miles) C11 (½ mile) C18 (1½ miles) C19 (4 miles) C4 (½ mile)	C13 (2 miles) C7 (4 miles) C11 (½ mile) C18 (1½ miles) C19 (4 miles) C4 (½ mile)	C4 (½ mile) C7 (4 miles) C11 (½ mile) C18 (1½ miles) C19 (4 miles)
Total	½	12½	12½	10½
Closed (permitted/authorized only)	C2 (11 miles)	C12 (1½ miles) C1 (1 mile) C2 (11 miles) C3 (2½ miles) C8 (2 miles) C10 (3 miles)	C16 (5 miles) C17 (2½ miles) C12 (1½ miles) C1 (1 mile) C3 (2½ miles) C8 (2 miles) C2 (11 miles) C10 (3 miles)	C1 (1 mile) C3 (2½ miles) C10 (3 miles)
Total	11	21	28½	6½
Post WSA Route	C1 (1 mile) C3 (2½ miles) C7 (4 miles) C10 (3 miles) C11 (½ mile) C18 (1½ miles) C19 (4 miles)			
Total	16½	0	0	0



Legend

WSA	Land Status
----- Way	BLM
o o o o Post WSA Route	FS
----- Closed	Private
	State

Scale

0 1 2 4 Miles

North Arrow

N

Disclaimer

No warranty is made by BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data

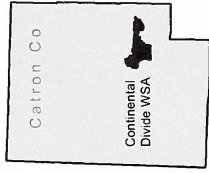
Map Information

Continental Divide WSA

Catron Co

Gila National Forest

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WSA ALTERNATIVE B

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

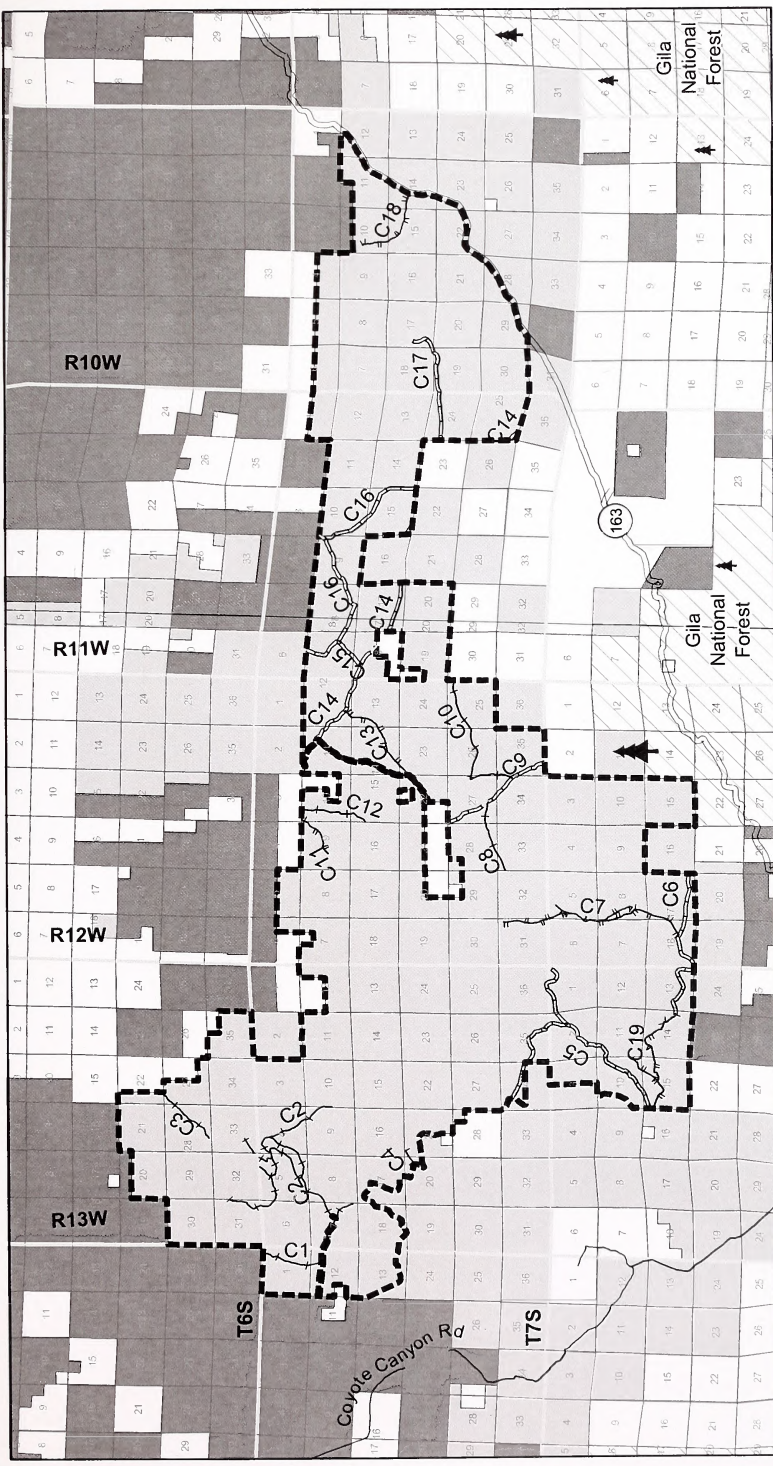


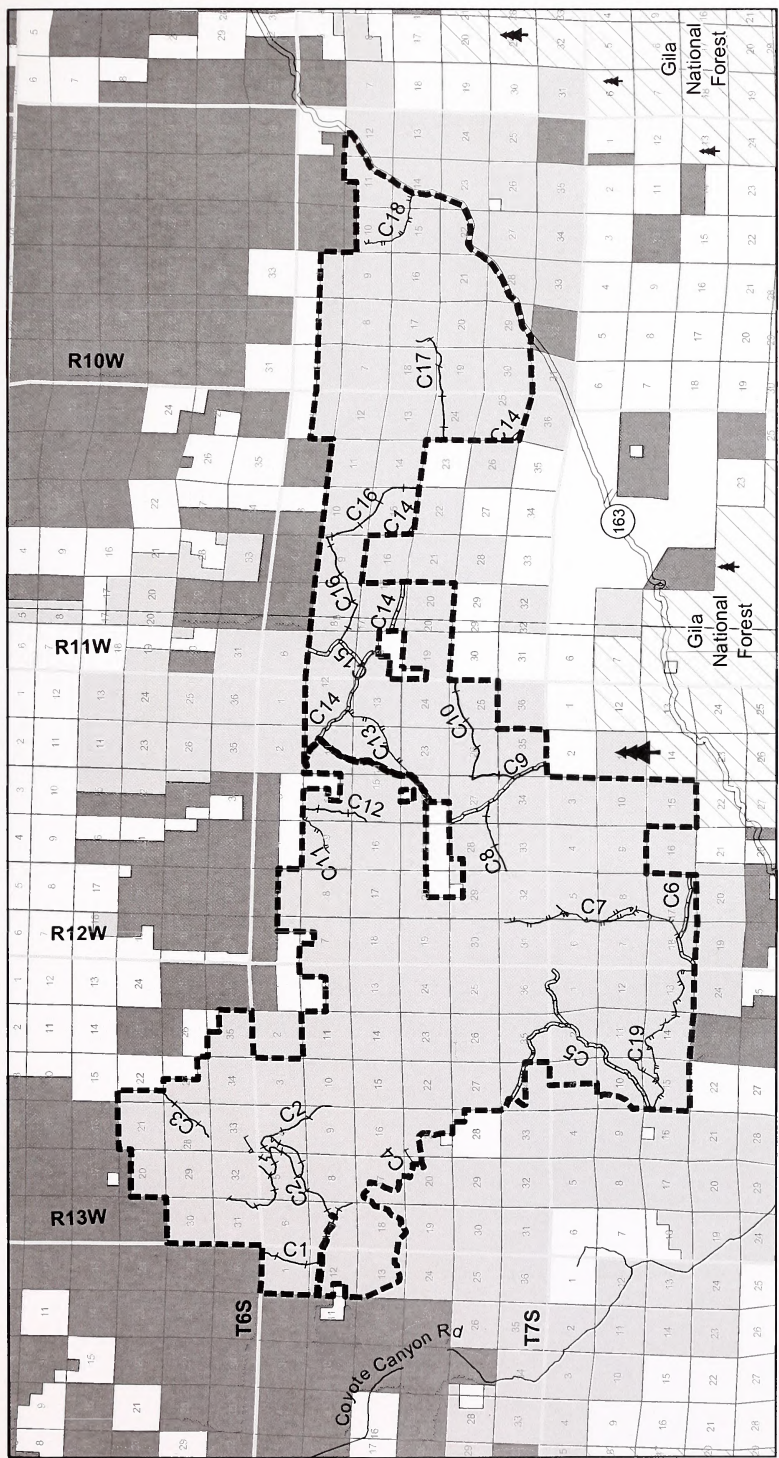
No warranty is made by BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data



Legend

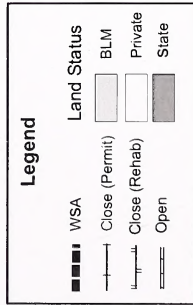
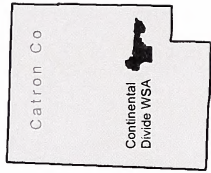
	WSA	Land Status
	Close (Permit)	BLM
	Close (Rehab)	Private
	Open	State

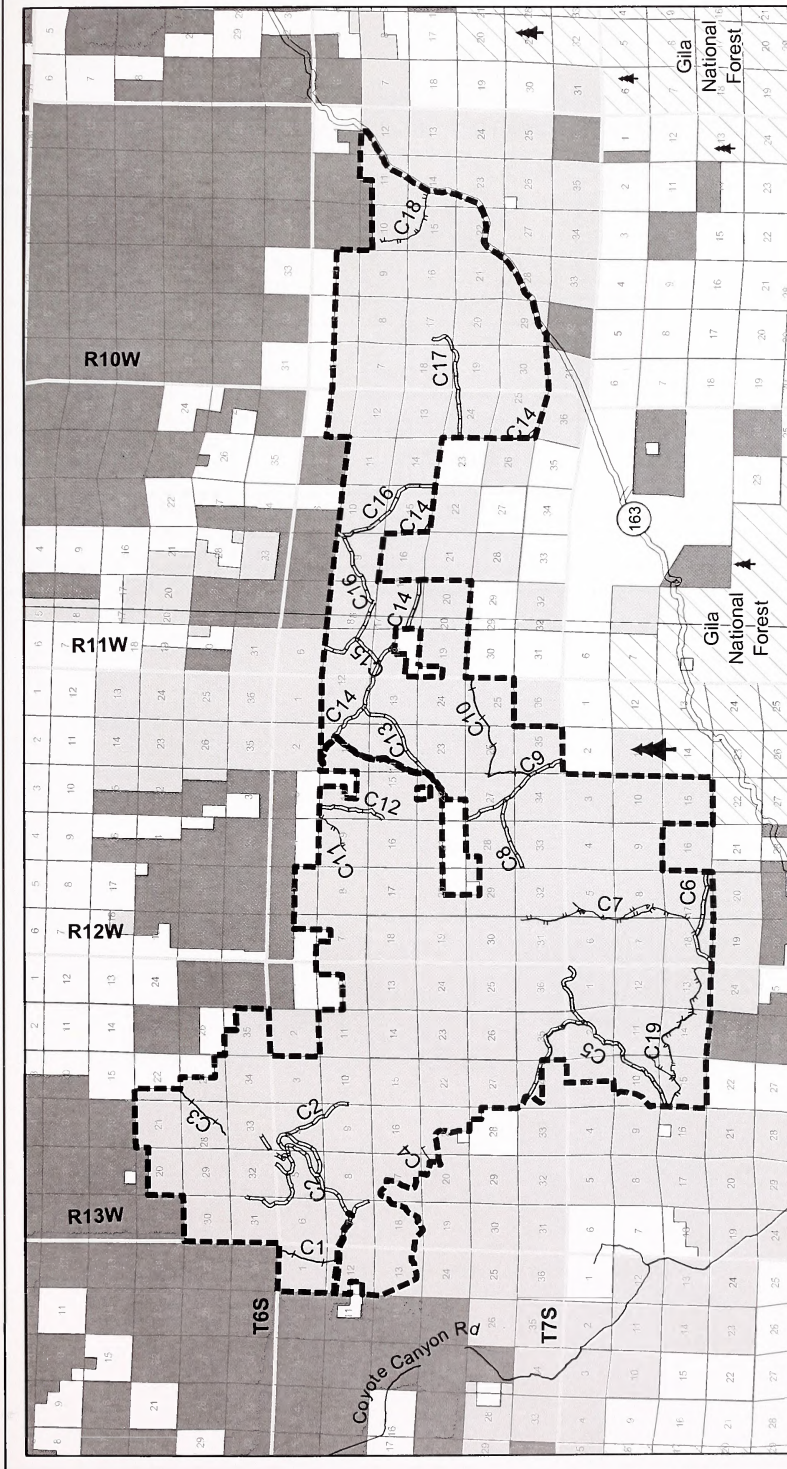




ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WSA
ALTERNATIVE C

No warranty is made by BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data

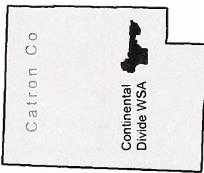
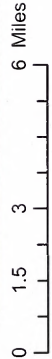




No warranty is made by BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data



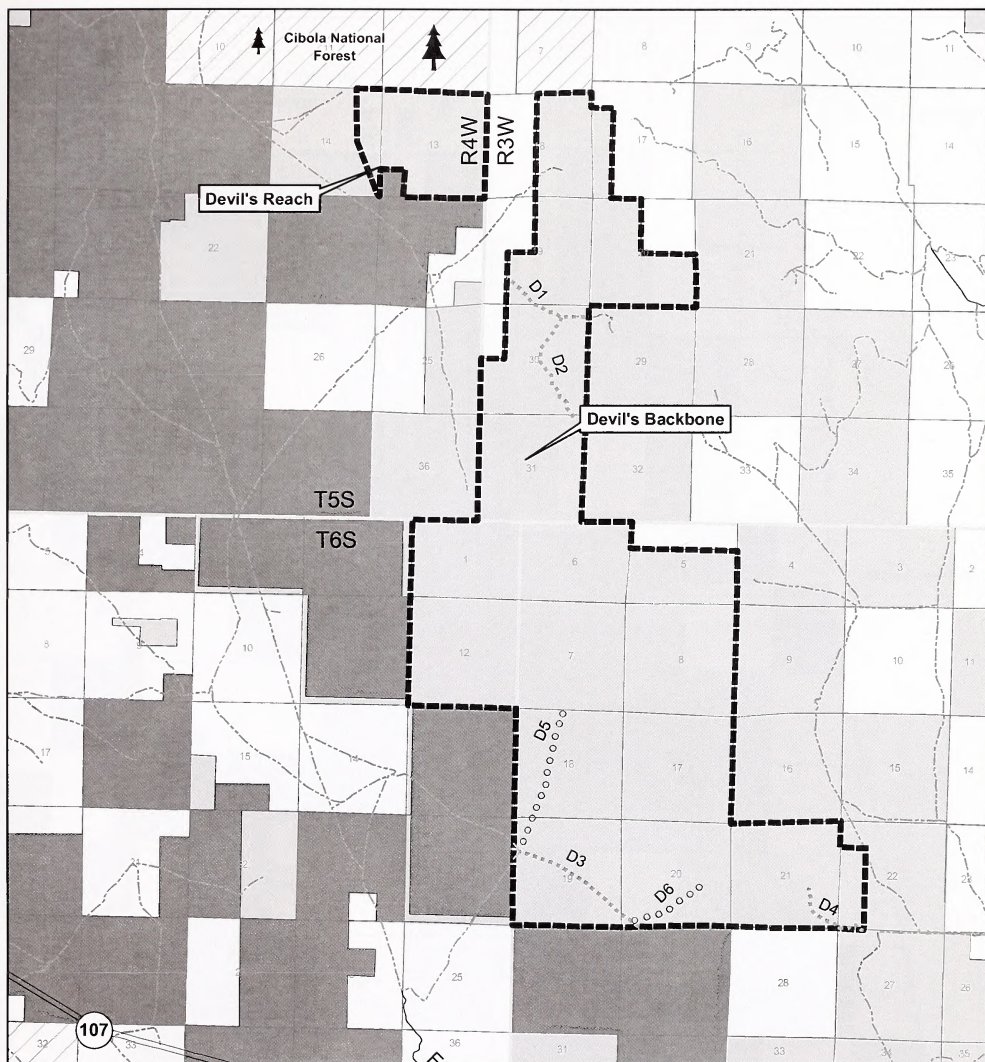
Legend	
	WSA
	Land Status
	Close (Permit)
	Close (Retab)
	Open
	BLM
	Private
	State



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE WSA ALTERNATIVE D

TABLE J-4
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
DEVIL'S BACKBONE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

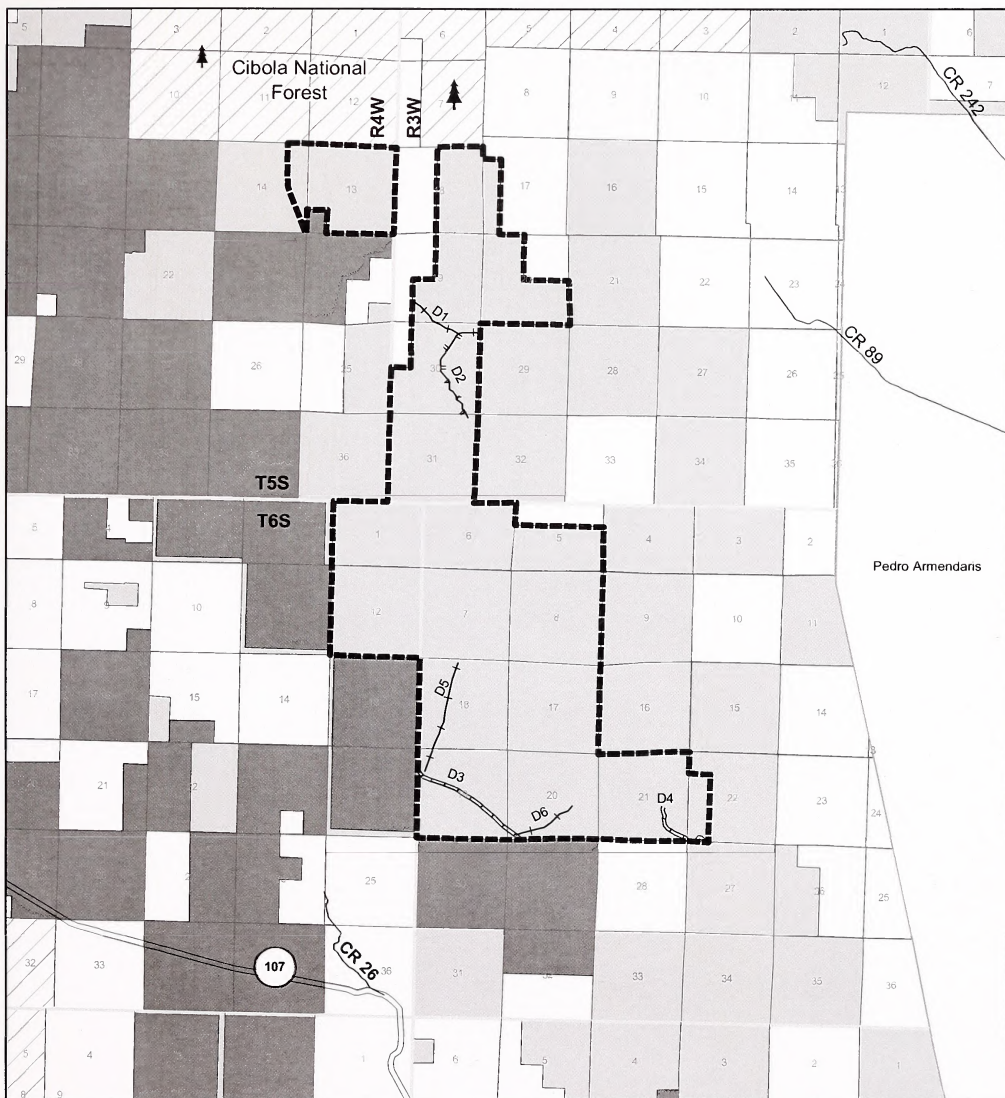
Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	D1 (1½ miles) D2 (2 miles) D3 (1½ miles) D4 (½ mile)	D3 (1½ miles) D4 (½ mile)	D3 (1½ miles)	D1 (1½ miles) D3 (1½ miles) D4 (½ mile)
Total	5½	2	1½	3½
Closed (rehabilitate)		D2 (2 miles)	D2 (2 miles) D5 (2 miles) D6 (1 mile)	D2 (2 miles)
Total	0	2	5	2
Closed (permitted/ authorized only)		D1 (1½ miles) D5 (2 miles) D6 (1 mile)	D1 (1½ miles) D4 (½ mile)	D5 (2 miles) D6 (1 mile)
Total	0	4½	2	3
Post WSA Route	D5 (2 miles) D6 (1 mile)			
Total	3	0	0	0



DEVIL'S BACKBONE & DEVIL'S REACH WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

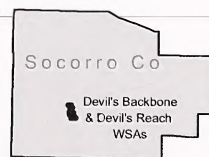
Land Status

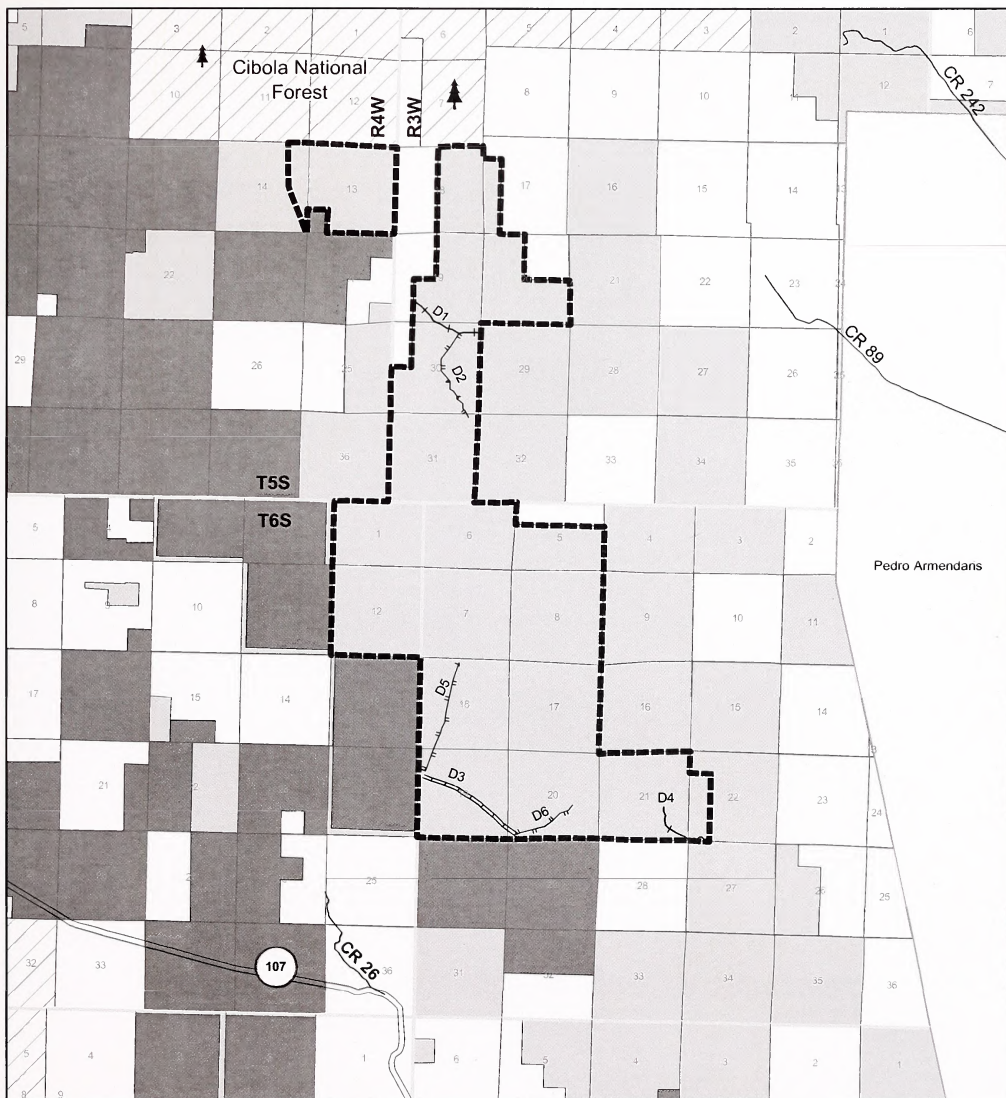
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN DEVILS REACH & DEVIL'S BACKBONE WSAs ALTERNATIVE B

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

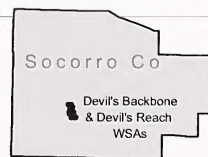
Land Status

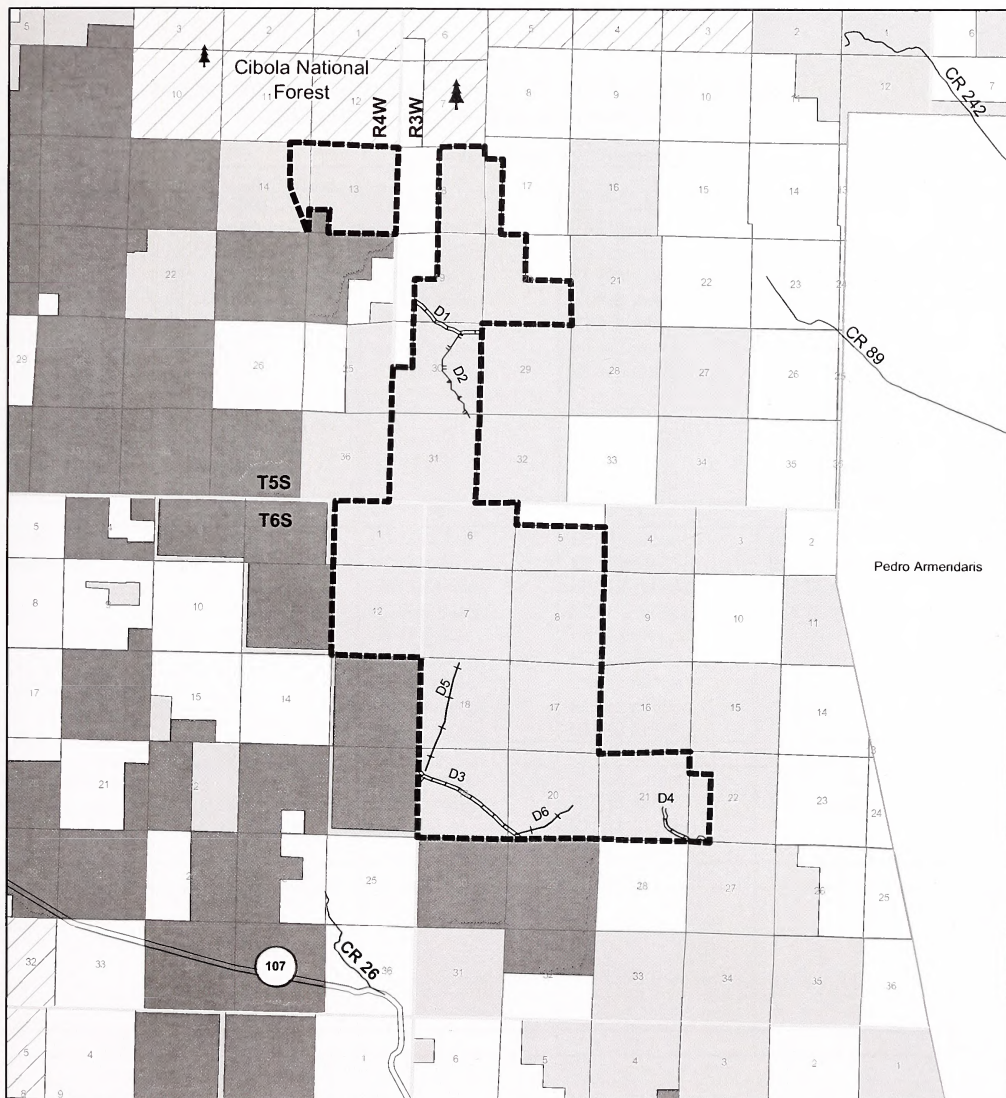
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN DEVILS REACH & DEVIL'S BACKBONE WSAs ALTERNATIVE C

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- + Close(Permit)
- + Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN DEVILS REACH & DEVIL'S BACKBONE WSAs ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data



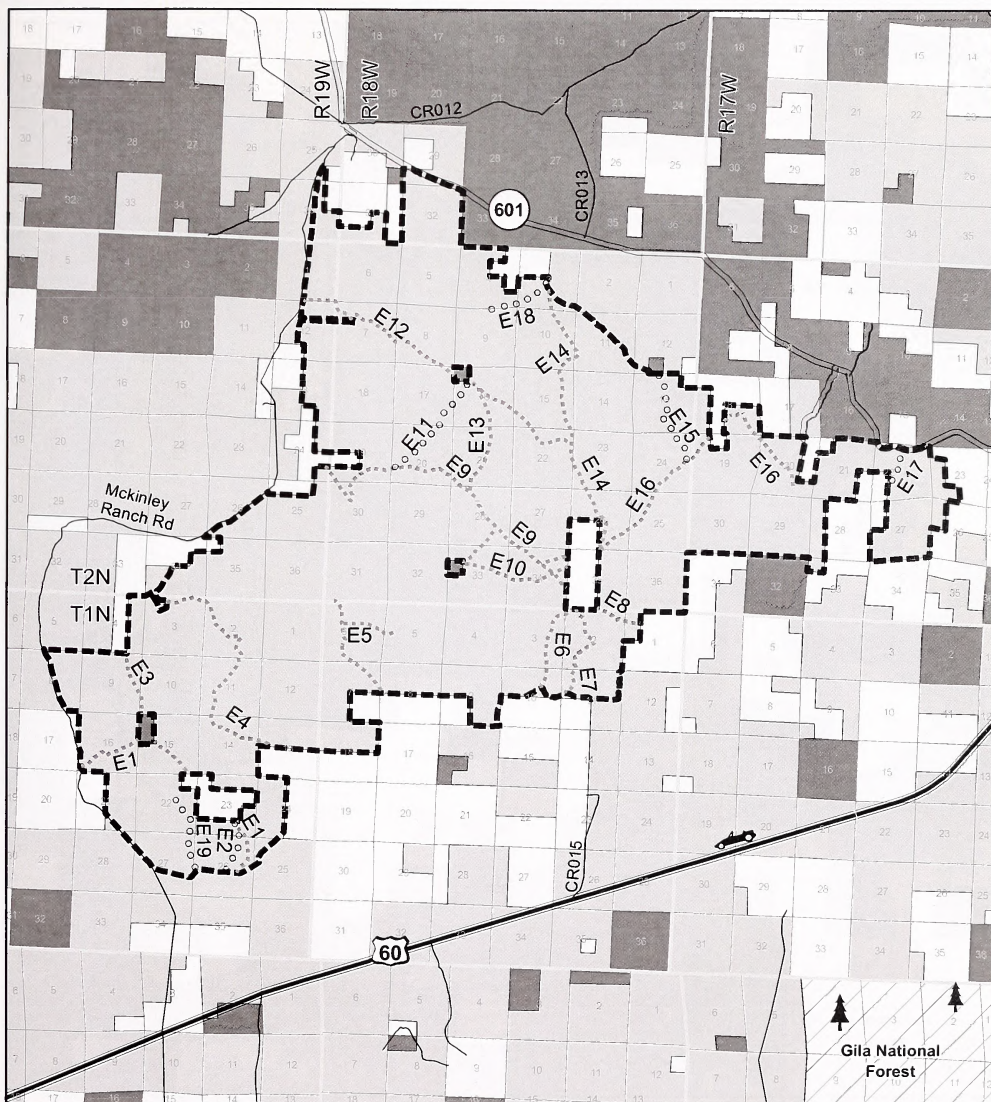
Socorro Co

Devil's Backbone
& Devil's Reach
WSAs

TABLE J-5
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
EAGLE'S PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	E1 (3 miles) E3 (1 mile) E4 (3½ miles) E5 (3½ miles) E6 (1½ miles) E7 (1½ miles) E8 (1 mile) E9 (6 miles) E10 (3 miles) E12 (5 miles) E13 (2 miles) E14 (5 miles) E16 (4½ miles)	E1 (1 mile) E3 (1 mile) E6 (1½ miles) E9 (6 miles) E10 (3 miles) E12 (5 miles) E13 (2 miles) E14 (5 miles) E16 (4½ miles)	E1 (1 mile) E3 (1 mile) E6 (1½ miles) E9 (6 miles) E10 (3 miles) E12 (3 miles) E13 (2 miles) E14 (5 miles)	E1 (3 miles) E3 (1 mile) E4 (3½ miles) E5 (3½ miles) E6 (1½ miles) E7 (1½ miles) E8 (1 mile) E9 (6 miles) E10 (3 miles) E12 (5 miles) E13 (2 miles) E14 (5 miles) E16 (4½ miles)
Total	40½	29	22½	40½
Closed (rehabilitate)		E1 (2 miles) E2 (1 mile) E4 (3½ miles) E7 (1½ miles) E8 (1 mile) E11 (2 miles) E17 (1 mile) E18 (2 miles) E19 (2 miles)	E1 (2 miles) E2 (1 mile) E4 (3½ miles) E7 (1½ miles) E8 (1 mile) E11 (2 miles) E12 (2 miles) E17 (1 mile) E19 (2 miles)	E2 (1 mile) E11 (2 miles) E17 (1 mile) E18 (2 miles)
Total	0	16	16	6
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		E5 (3½ miles) E15 (2 miles)	E5 (3½ miles) E15 (2 miles) E16 (4½ miles) E18 (2 miles)	E15 (2 miles) E19 (2 miles)
Total	0	5½	12	4
Post WSA Route	E2 (1 mile) E11 (2 miles) E15 (2 miles) E17 (1 mile) E18 (2 miles) E19 (2 miles)			
Total	10	0	0	0

EAGLE PEAK WSA ROUTES
 ALTERNATIVE A



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- o o o Post WSA Route

Land Status

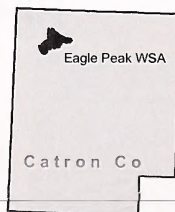
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

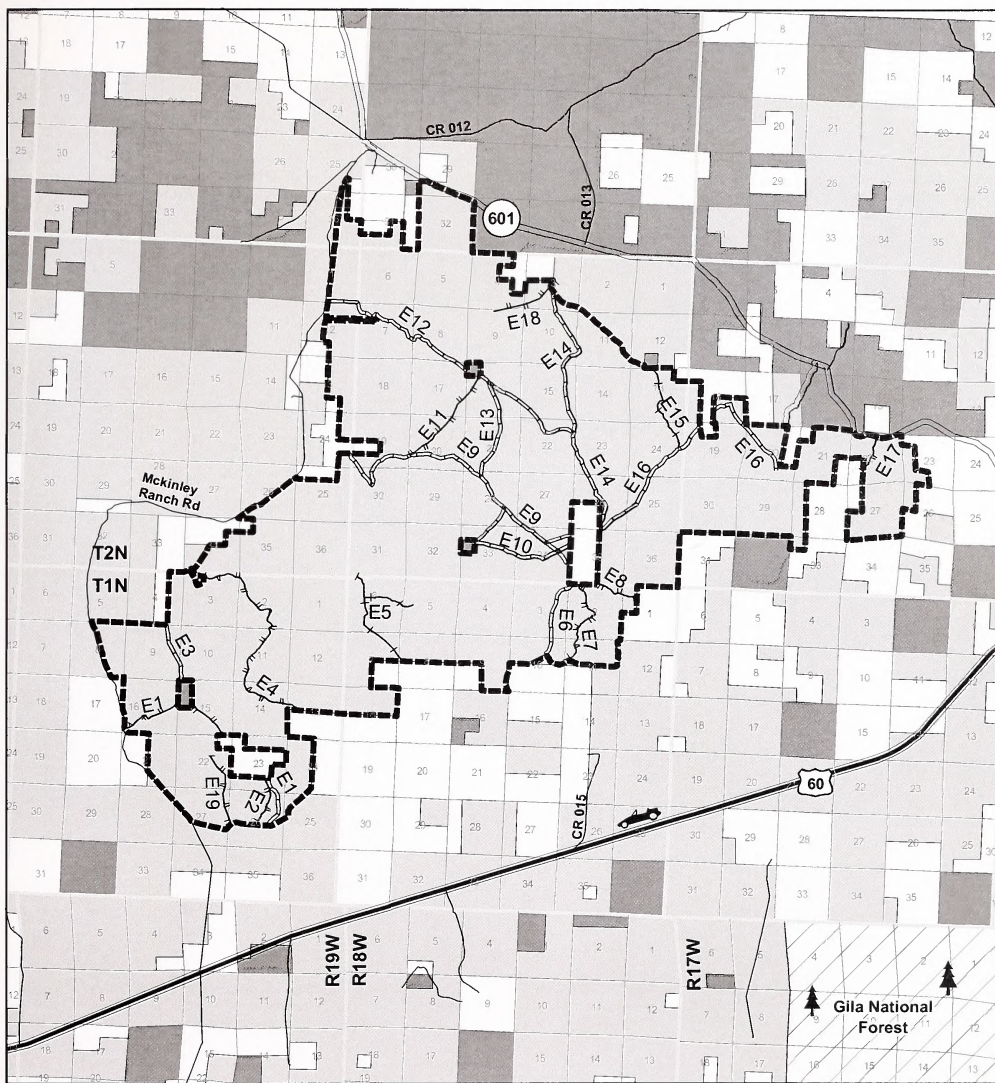
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

EAGLE PEAK WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

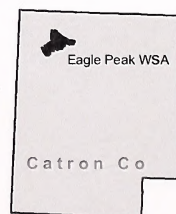
Land Status

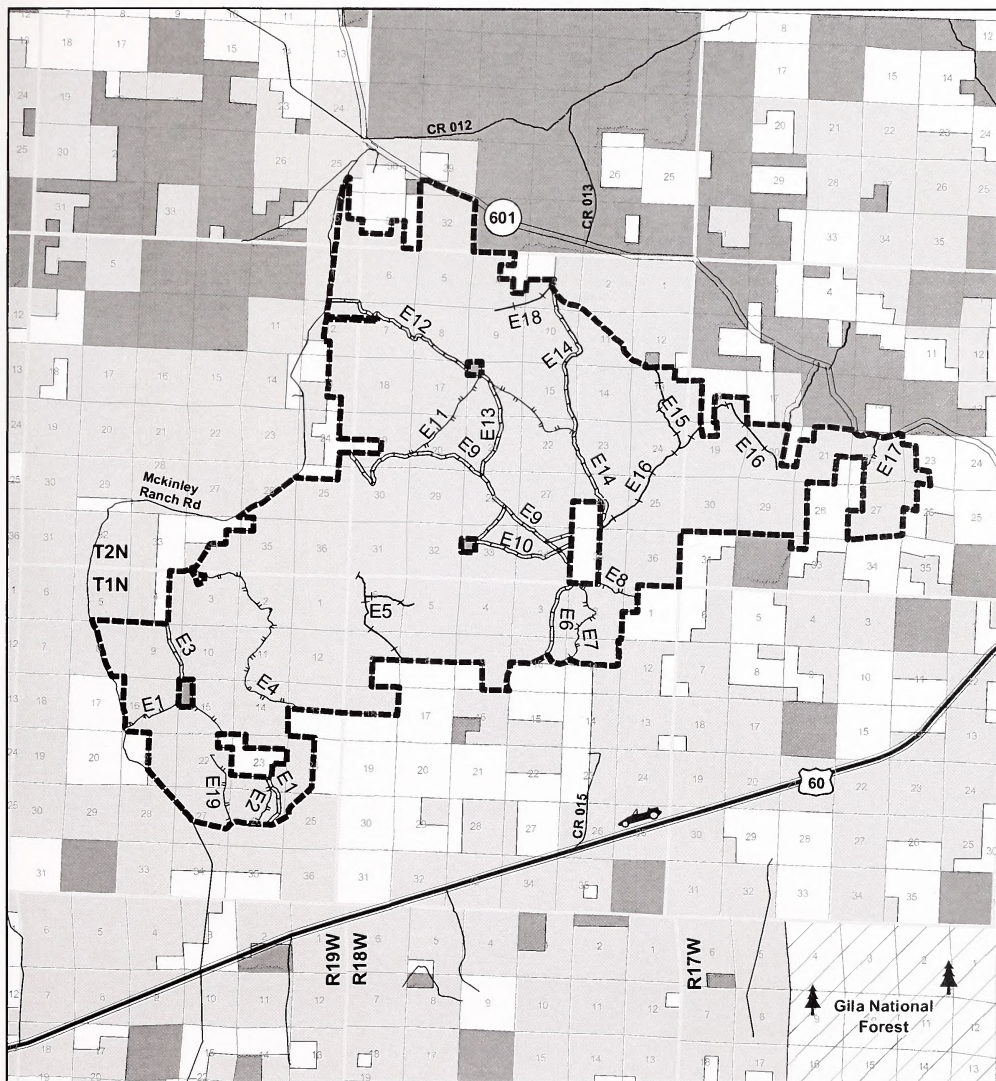
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN EAGLE PEAK WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

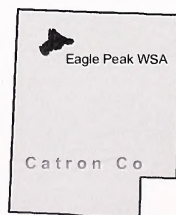
Land Status

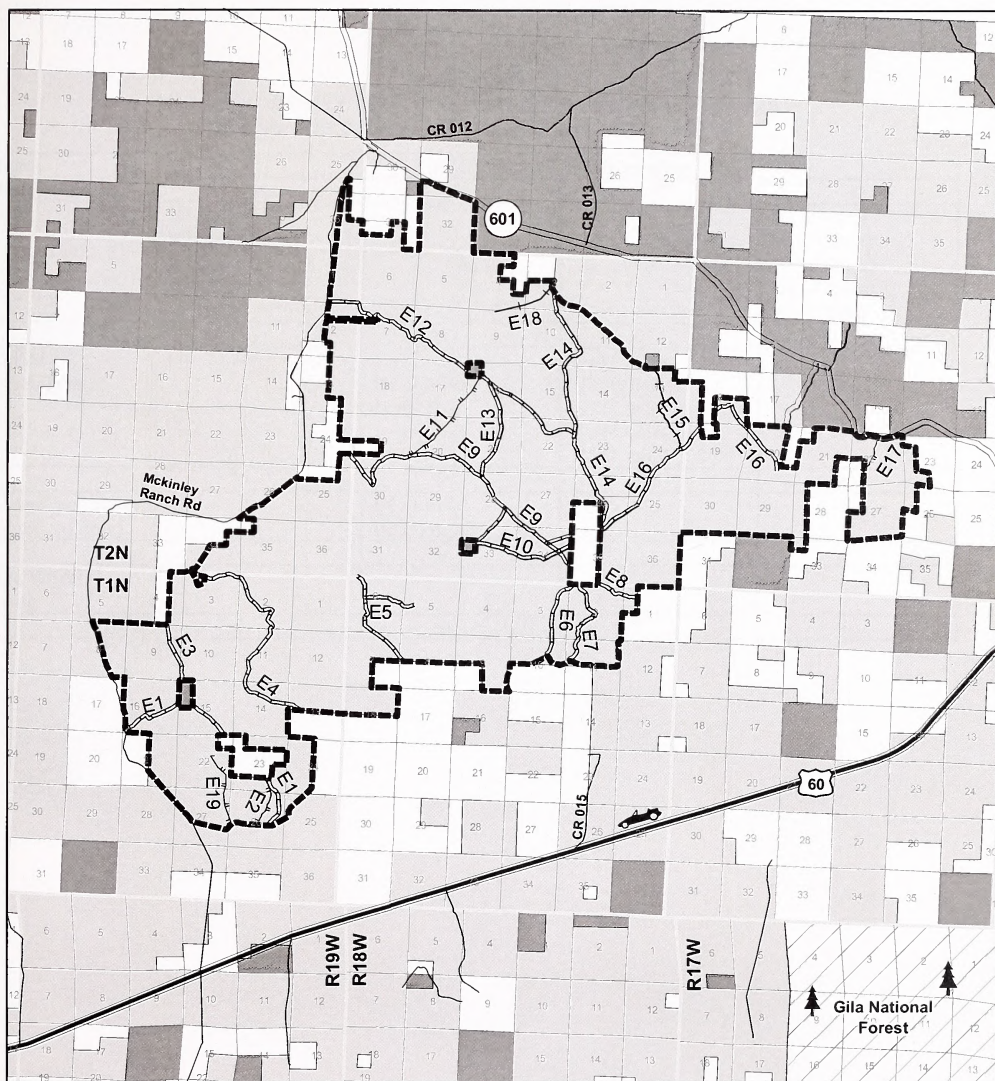
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN EAGLE PEAK WSA ALTERNATIVE C

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State



0 1.5 3 6 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN EAGLE PEAK WSA ALTERNATIVE D

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data

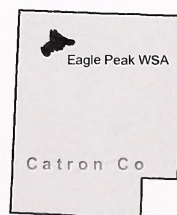
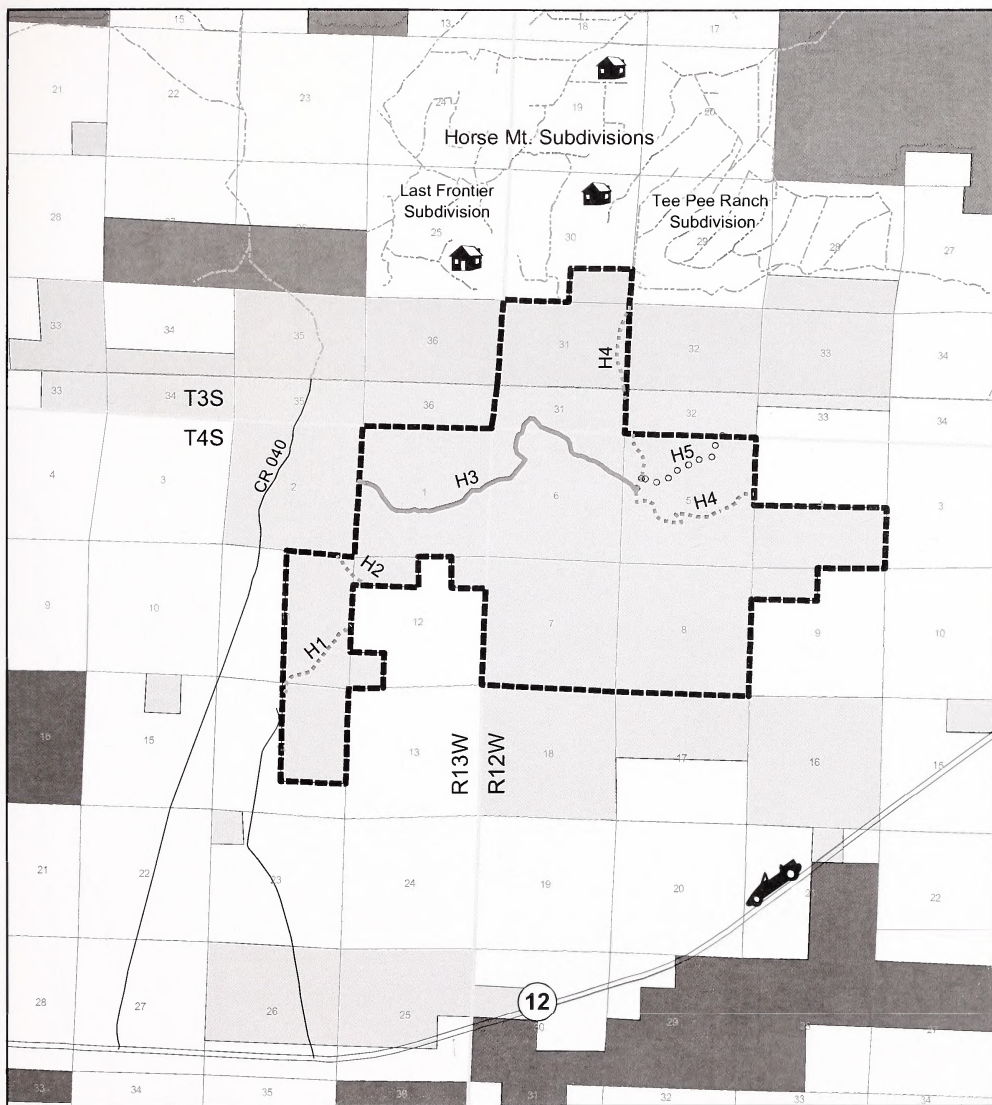


TABLE J-6
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
HORSE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	H1 (1 mile) H2 (½ mile) H4 (4 miles) H5 (1 mile)			H1 (1 mile) H2 (½ mile) H3 (2 miles) H4 (4 miles) H5 (1 mile)
Total	6½	0	0	8½
Closed (rehabilitate)	H3 (2 miles)	H3 (2 miles) H4 (4 miles) H5 (1 mile)	H1 (1 mile) H2 (½ mile) H3 (2 miles) H4 (4 miles) H5 (1 mile)	
Total	2	7	8½	0
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		H1 (1 mile) H2 (½ mile)		
Total	0	1½	0	0
Post WSA Route				
Total	0	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- oooo Post WSA Route
- Closed Route

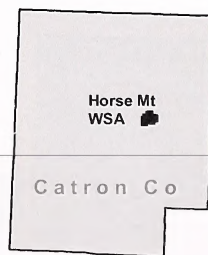
Land Status

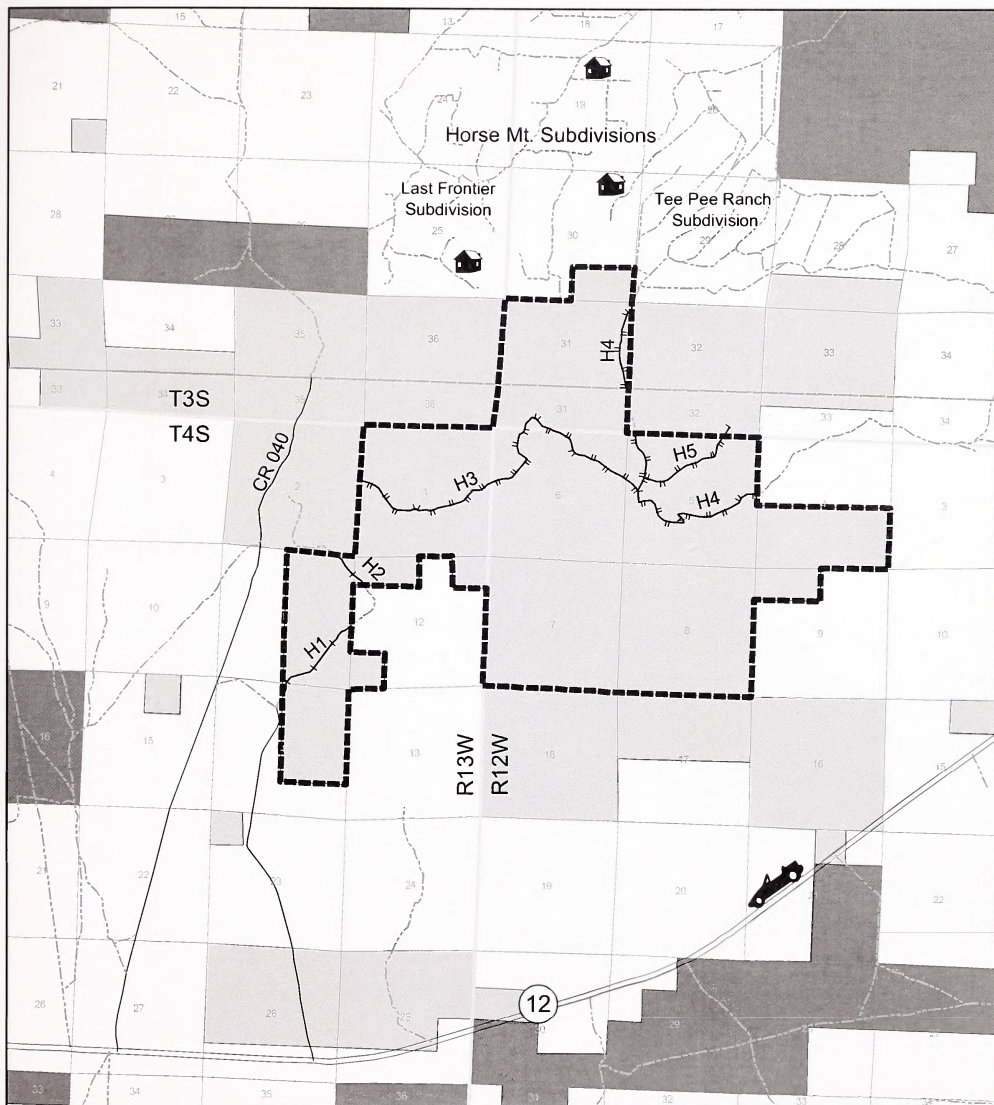
- BLM
- Private
- State

HORSE MOUNTAIN WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close(Permit)
- +--- Close(Rehab)
- ===== Open

Land Status

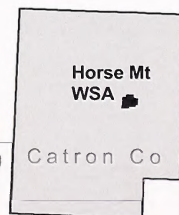
- BLM
- Private
- State

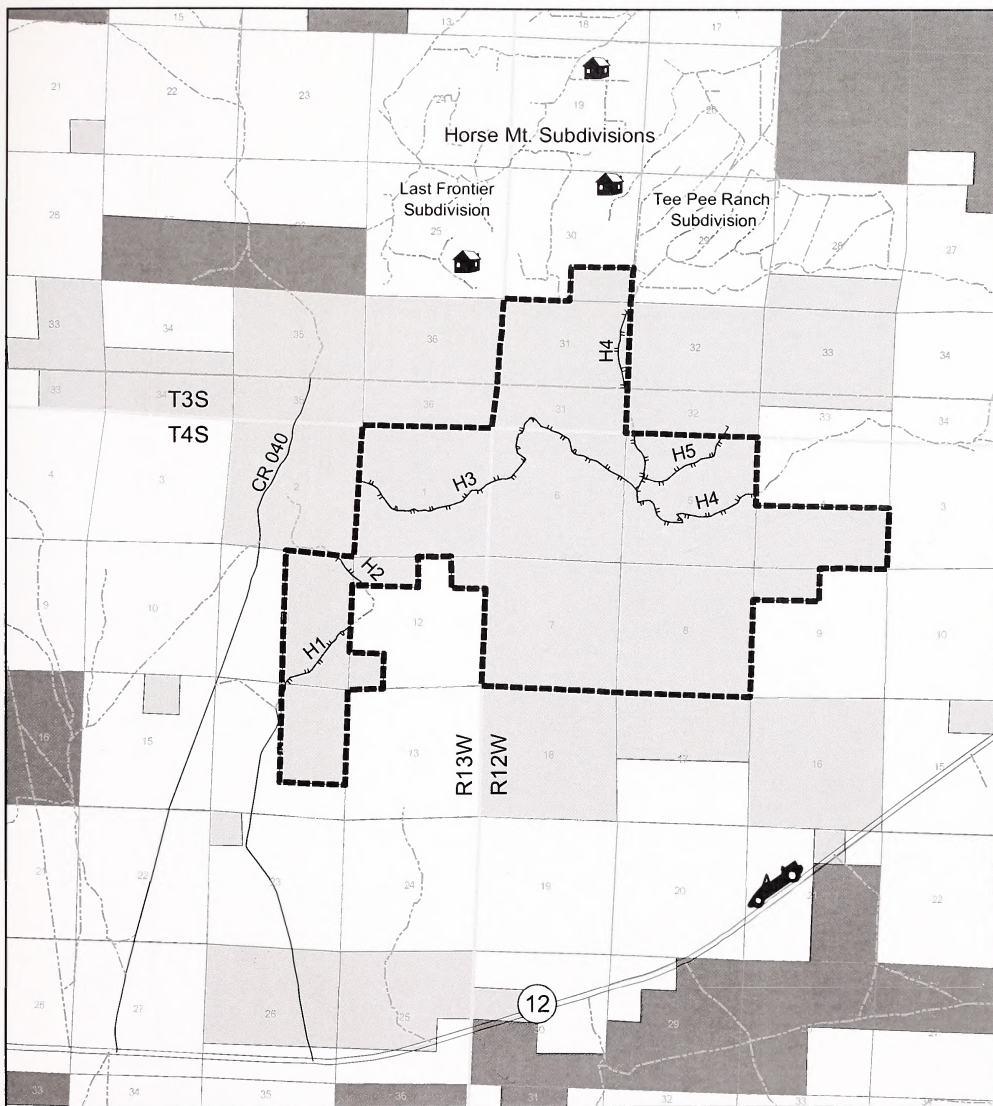
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN HORSE MOUNTAIN WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN HORSE MOUNTAIN WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data

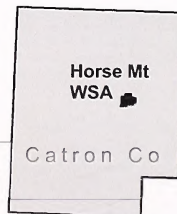
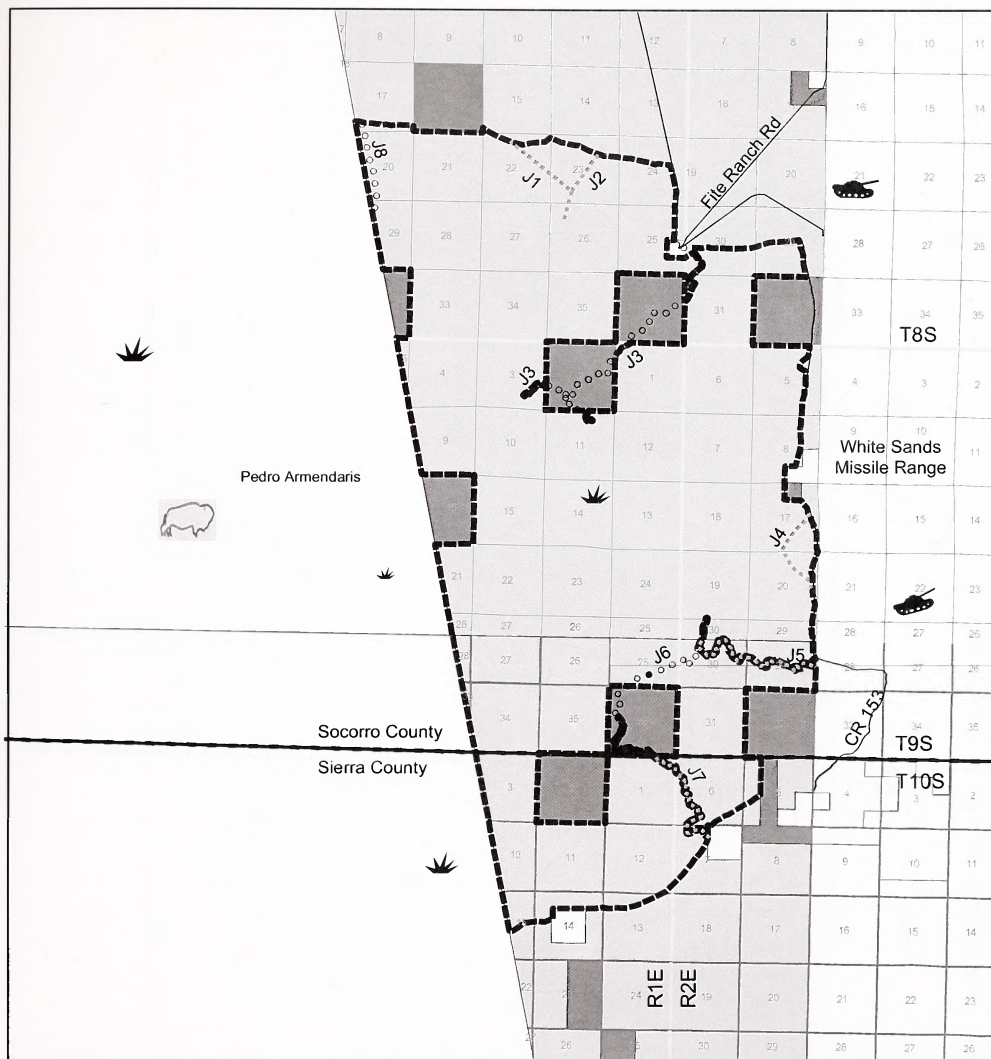


TABLE J-7
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
JORNADA DEL MUERTO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	J1 (2 miles) J2 (2 miles) J3 (2 miles CS) J4 (2 miles) J5 (3 miles-CS) J7 (1½ miles-CS)	J1 (2 miles) J2 (1¼ miles) J4 (2 miles) J5 (3 miles-CS) J7 (1½ miles-CS)	J1 (2 miles) J2 (1¼ miles) J4 (2 miles) J5 (3 miles-CS) J7 (1½ miles-CS)	J1 (2 miles) J2 (2 miles) J3 (2 miles-CS) J4 (2 miles) J5 (3 miles-CS) J7 (1½ miles-CS)
Total	12½	9¾	9¾	12½
Closed (rehabilitate)		J6 (2 miles) J8 (½ mile)	J6 (2 miles) J8 (½ mile)	J6 (2 miles) J8 (½ mile)
Total	0	2½	2½	2½
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		J2 (¾ mile) J3 (2 miles-CS)	J2 (¾ mile) J3 (2 miles-CS)	
Total	0	2¾	2¾	0
Post WSA Route	J6 (2 miles) J8 (½ mile)			
Total	2½	0	0	0

NOTE: CS = Cherry-stem Road



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- ooooo Post WSA Route

Land Status

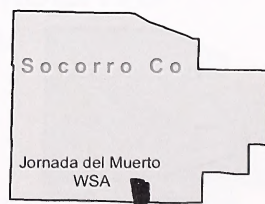
- BLM
- Private
- State

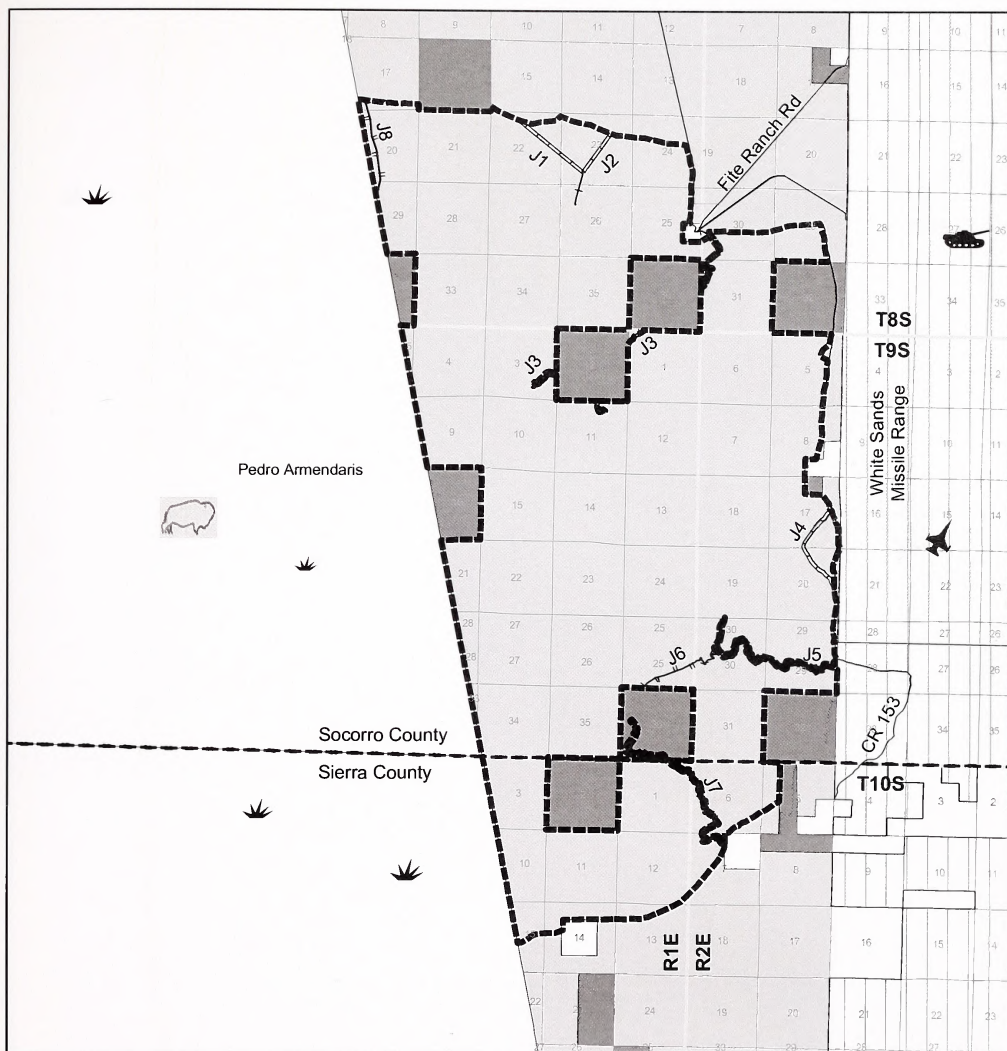
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

JORNADA DEL MUERTO WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close (Permit)
- +--- Close (Rehab)
- Open

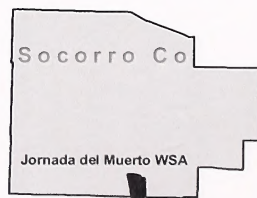
Land Status

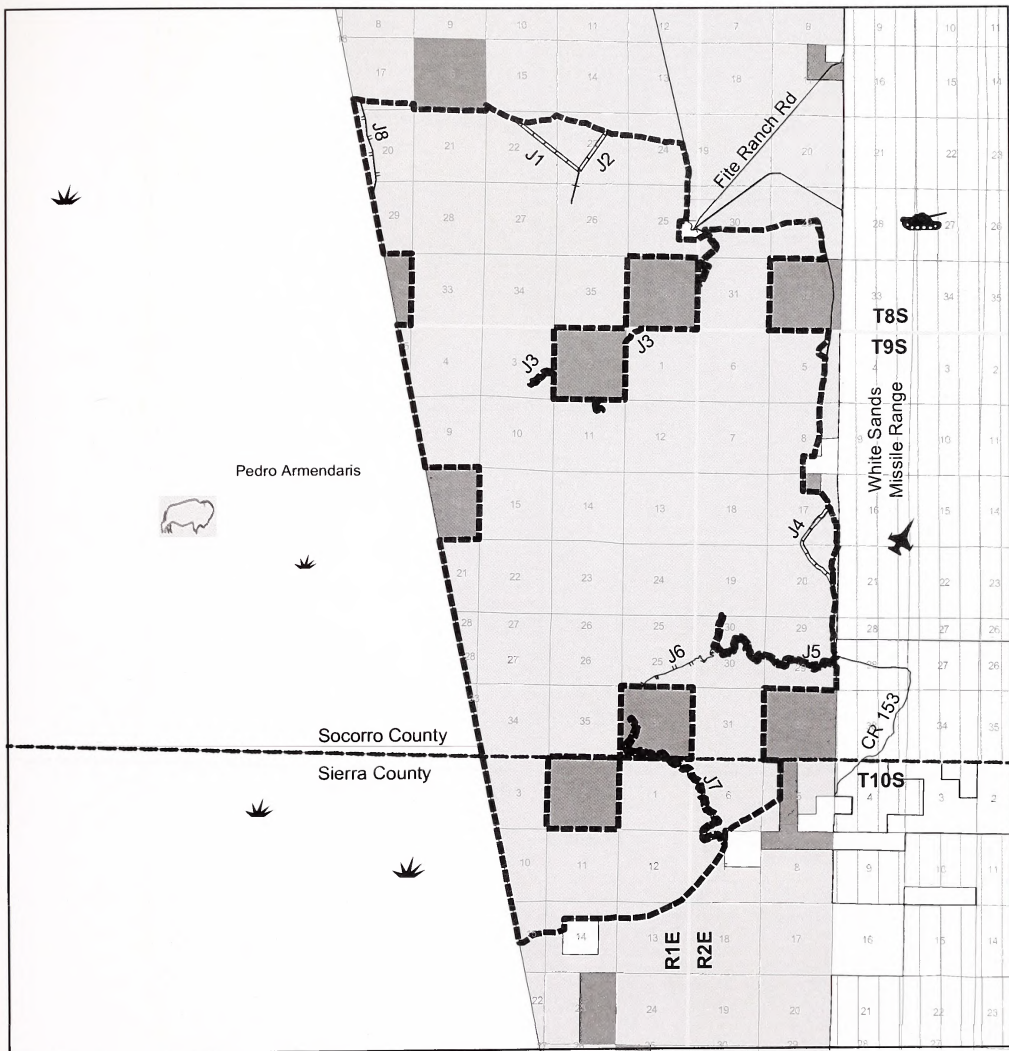
- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN JORNADA DEL MUERTO ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close (Permit)
- +--- Close (Rehab)
- Open

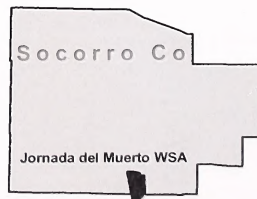
Land Status

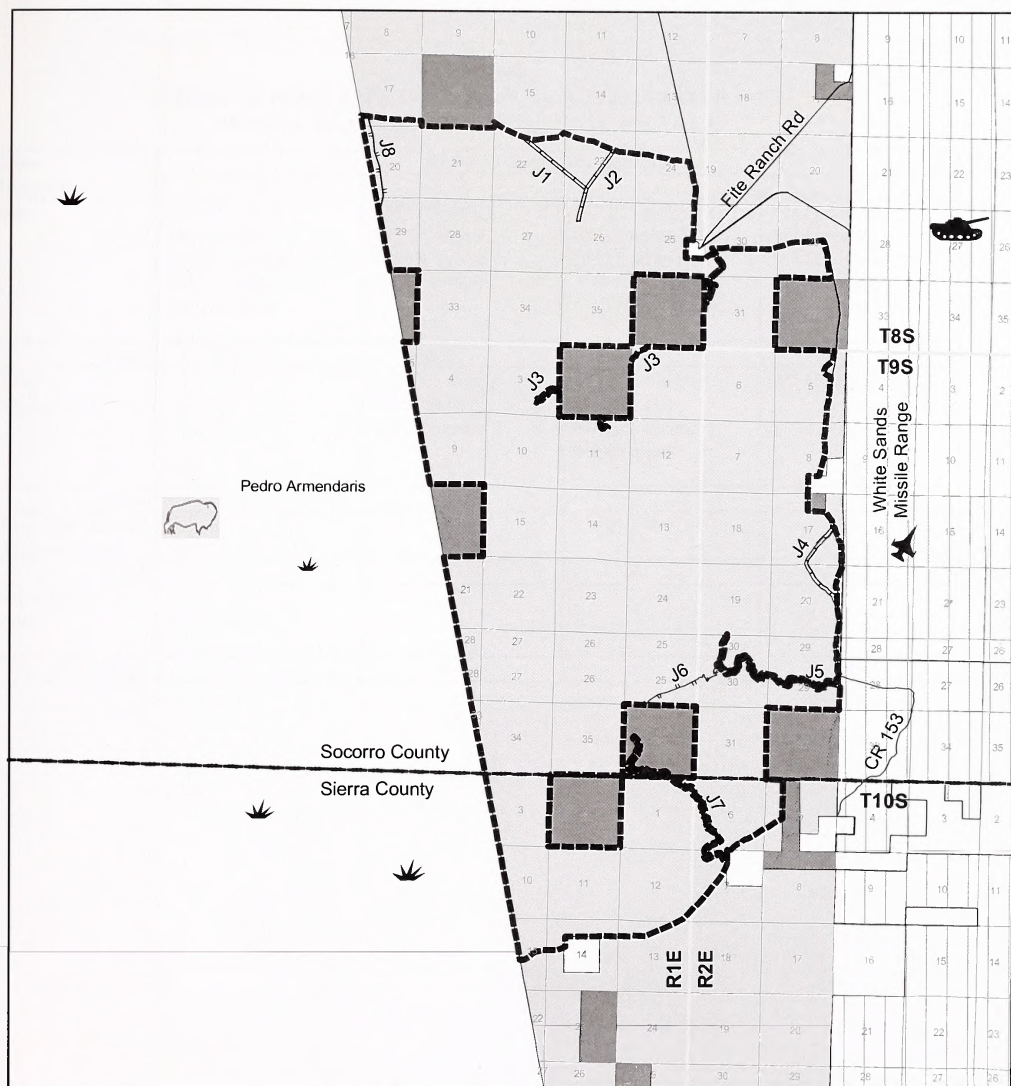
- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN JORNADA DEL MUERTO ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close (Permit)
- +--- Close (Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN JORNADA DEL MUERTO ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

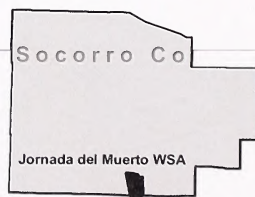
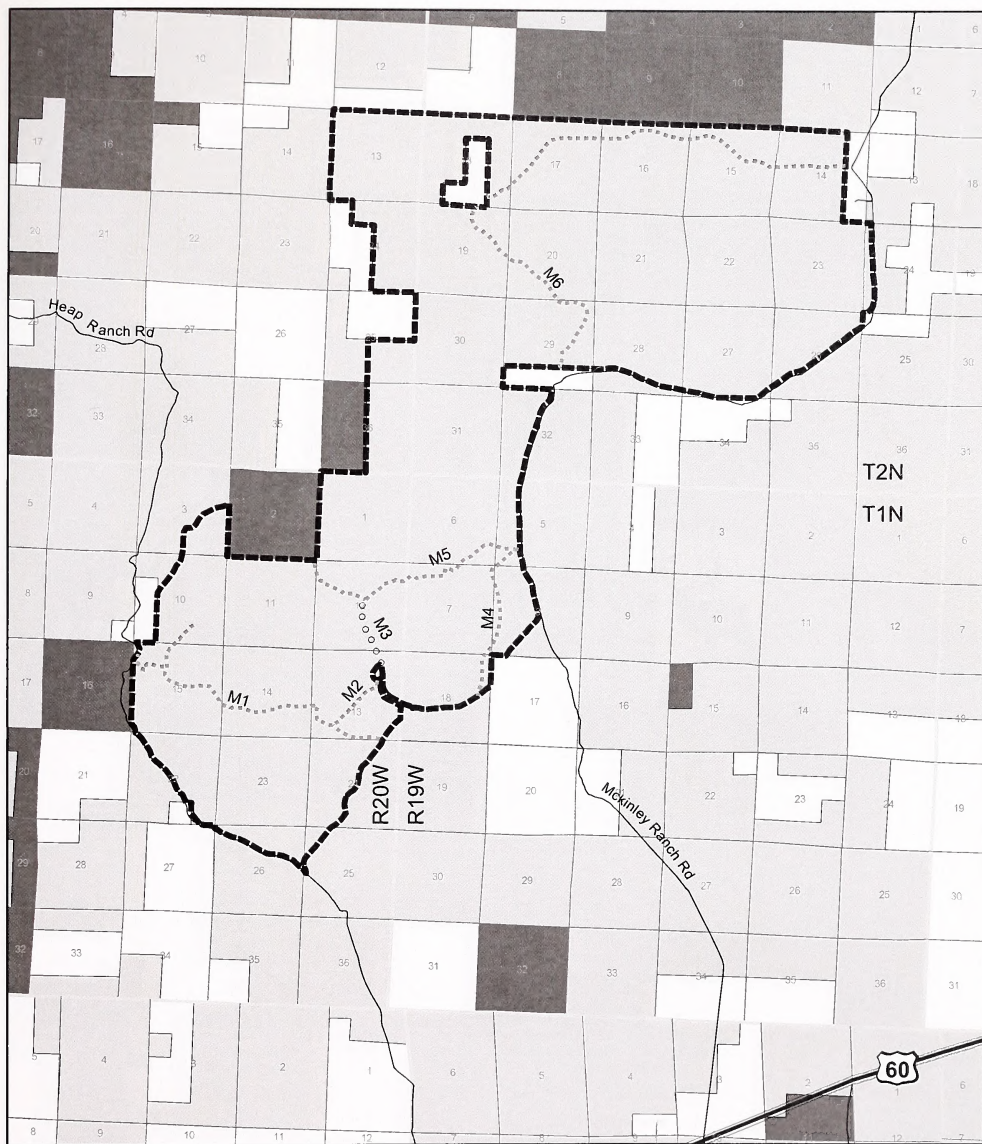


TABLE J-8
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
MESITA BLANCA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route By Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	M1 (4 miles) M2 (1 mile) M4 (2½ miles) M5 (3 miles) M6 (8 miles)	M1 (2½ miles) M2 (1 miles) M5 (3 miles) M6 (8 miles)	M1 (2½ miles) M2 (1 mile) M5 (3 miles)	M1 (4 miles) M2 (1 mile) M4 (2½ miles) M5 (3 miles) M6 (8 miles)
Total	18½	14½	6½	18½
Closed (rehabilitate)		M1 (1½ miles) M3 (1 mile) M4 (2½ miles)	M1 (1½ miles) M3 (1 mile) M4 (2½ miles) M6 (4 miles)	M3 (1 mile)
Total	0	5	9	1
Closed (permitted/authorized only)			M6 (4 miles)	
Total	0	0	4	0
Post WSA Route	M3 (1 mile)			
Total	1	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- o o o o Post WSA Route

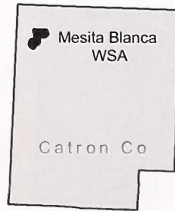
Land Status

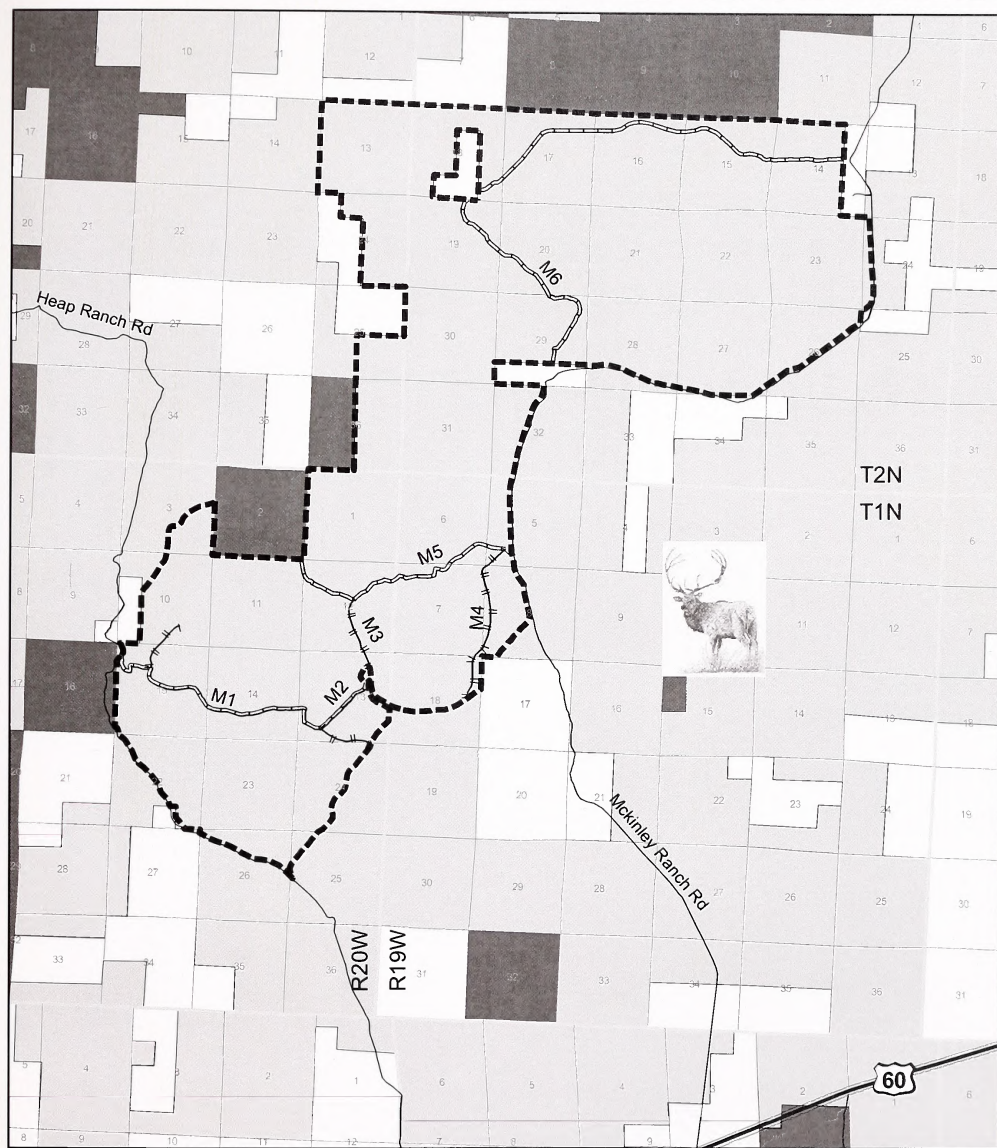
- BLM
- Private
- State



MESITA BLANCA WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

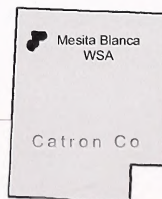
Land Status

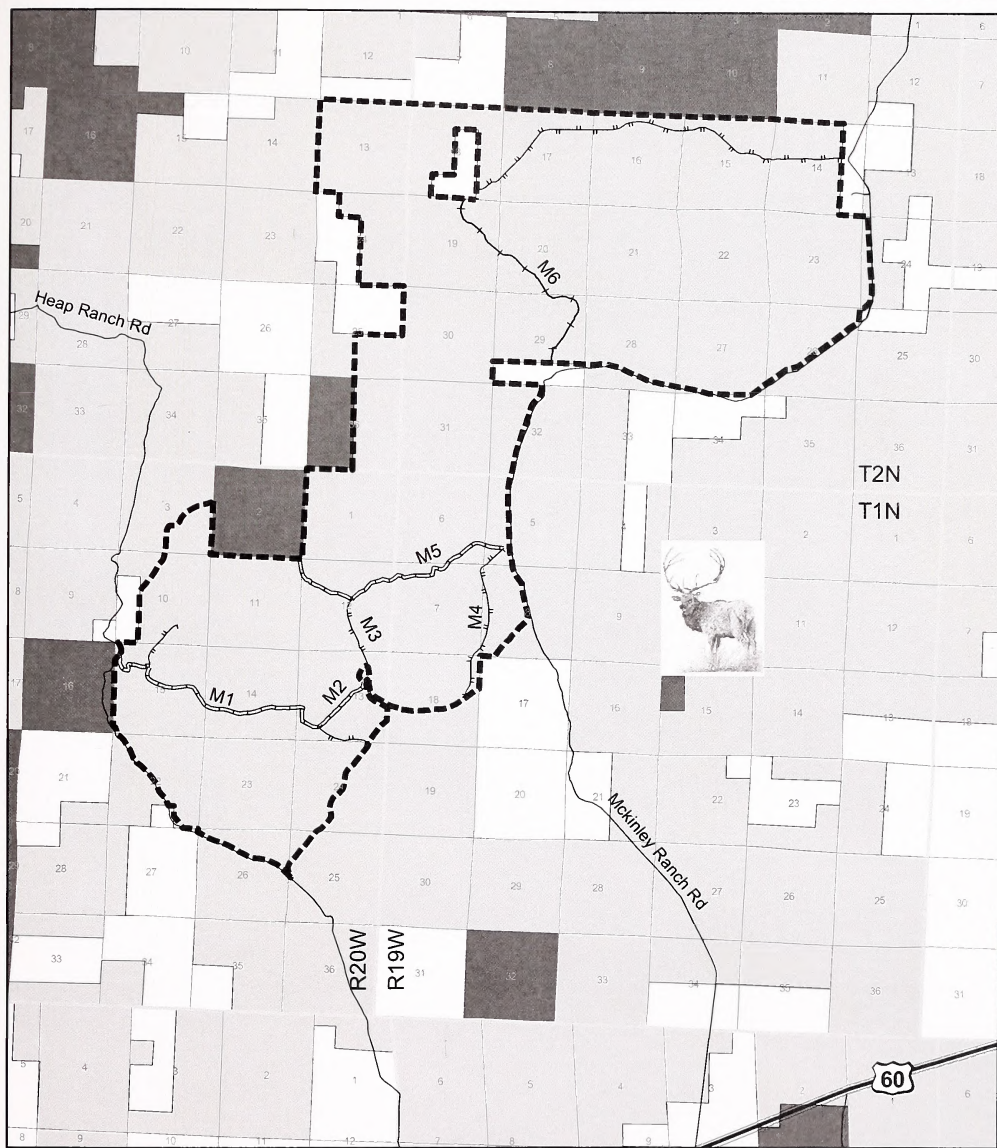
- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN MESITA BLANCA WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

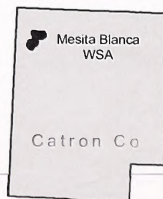
Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

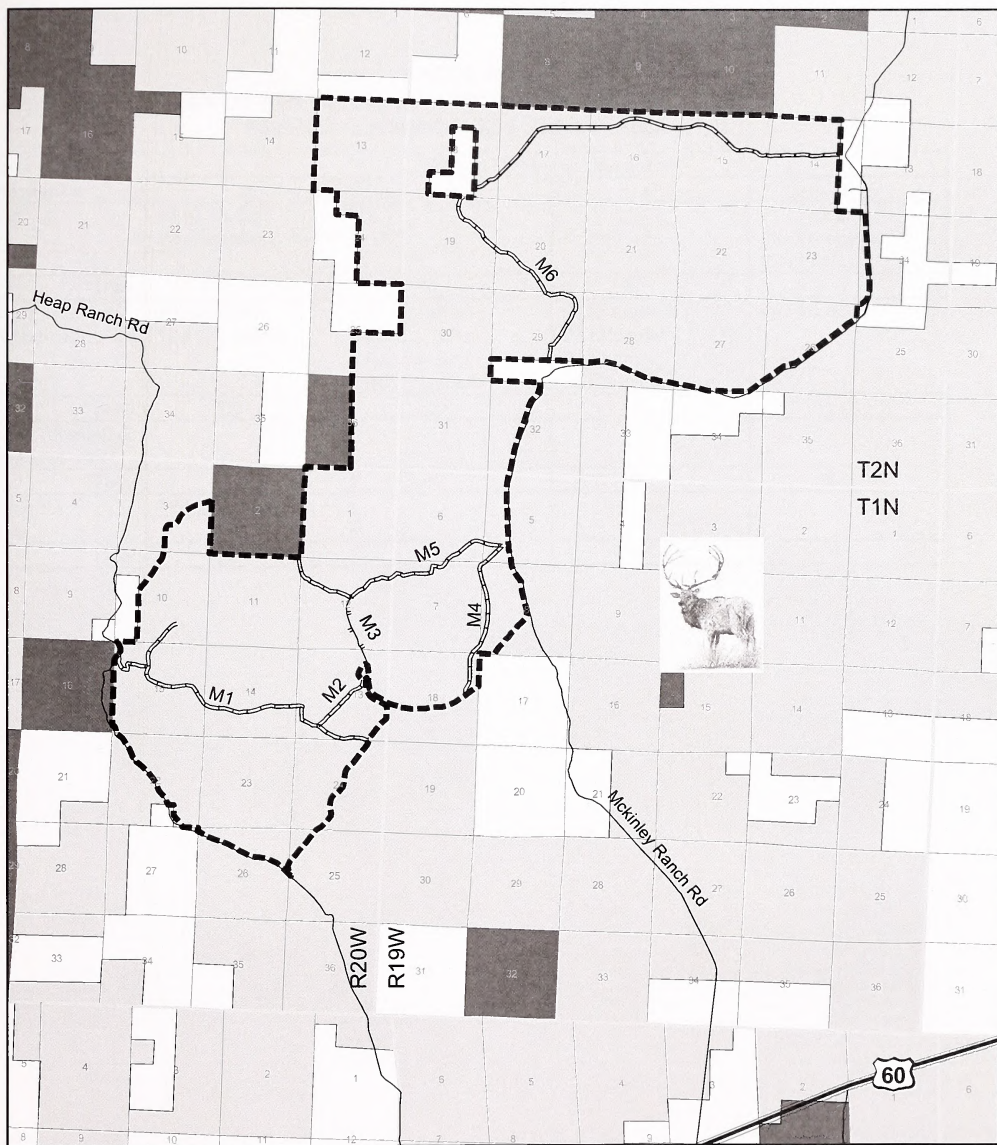
ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN MESITA BLANCA WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.



0 1 2 4 Miles



Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN MESITA BLANCA WSA ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

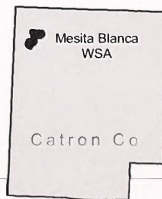
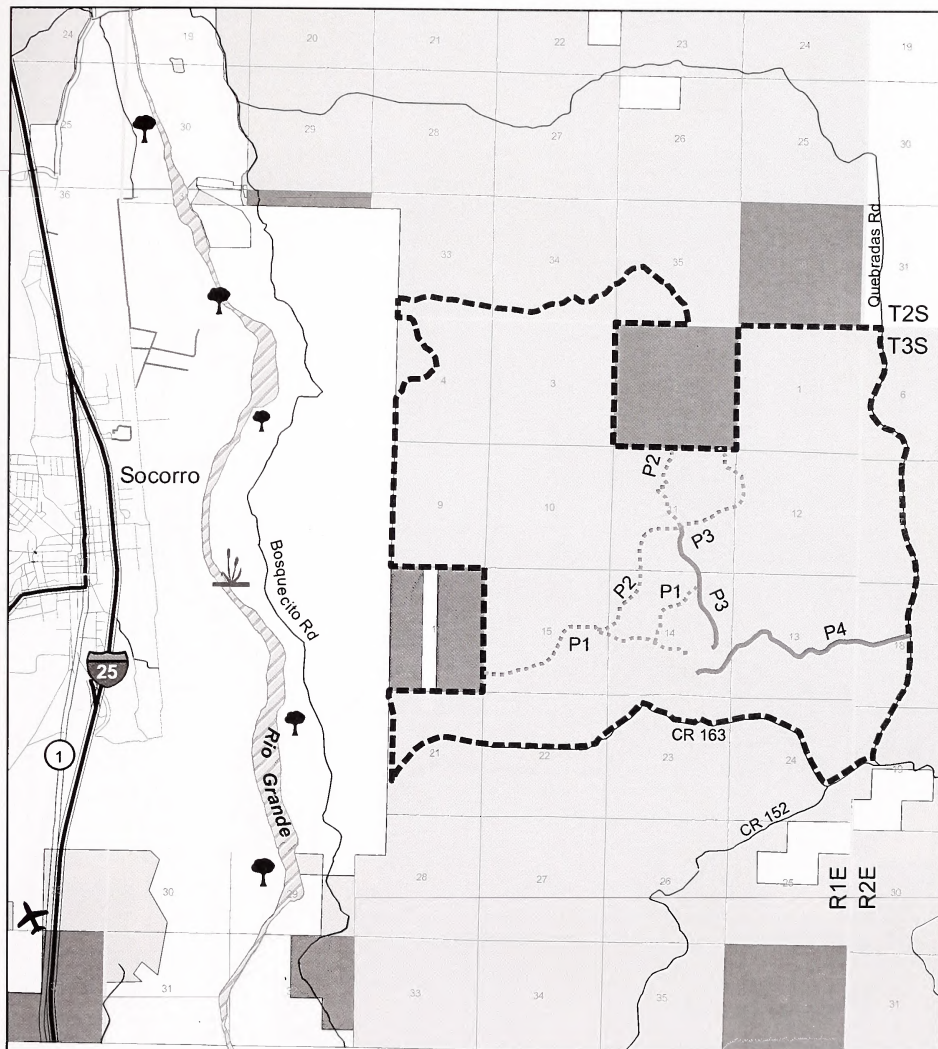


TABLE J-9
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
PRESILLA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	P1 (3 miles) P2 (2½ miles)			P1 (3 miles) P2 (2½ miles) P3 (3 miles)
Total	5 ½	0	0	8 ½
Closed (rehabilitate)	P3 (3 miles) *P4 (2½ miles)	P1 (3 miles) P2 (2½ miles) P3 (3 miles) P4 (2½ miles)	P1 (3 miles) P2 (2½ miles) P3 (3 miles) P4 (2½ miles)	P4 (2½ miles)
Total	5½	11	11	2 ½
Closed (permitted/ authorized only)				
Total	0	0	0	0
Post WSA Route	*P4 (2½ miles)			
Total	2½	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- o o o o Post WSA Route
- Closed

Land Status

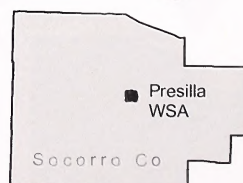
- BLM
- Private
- State

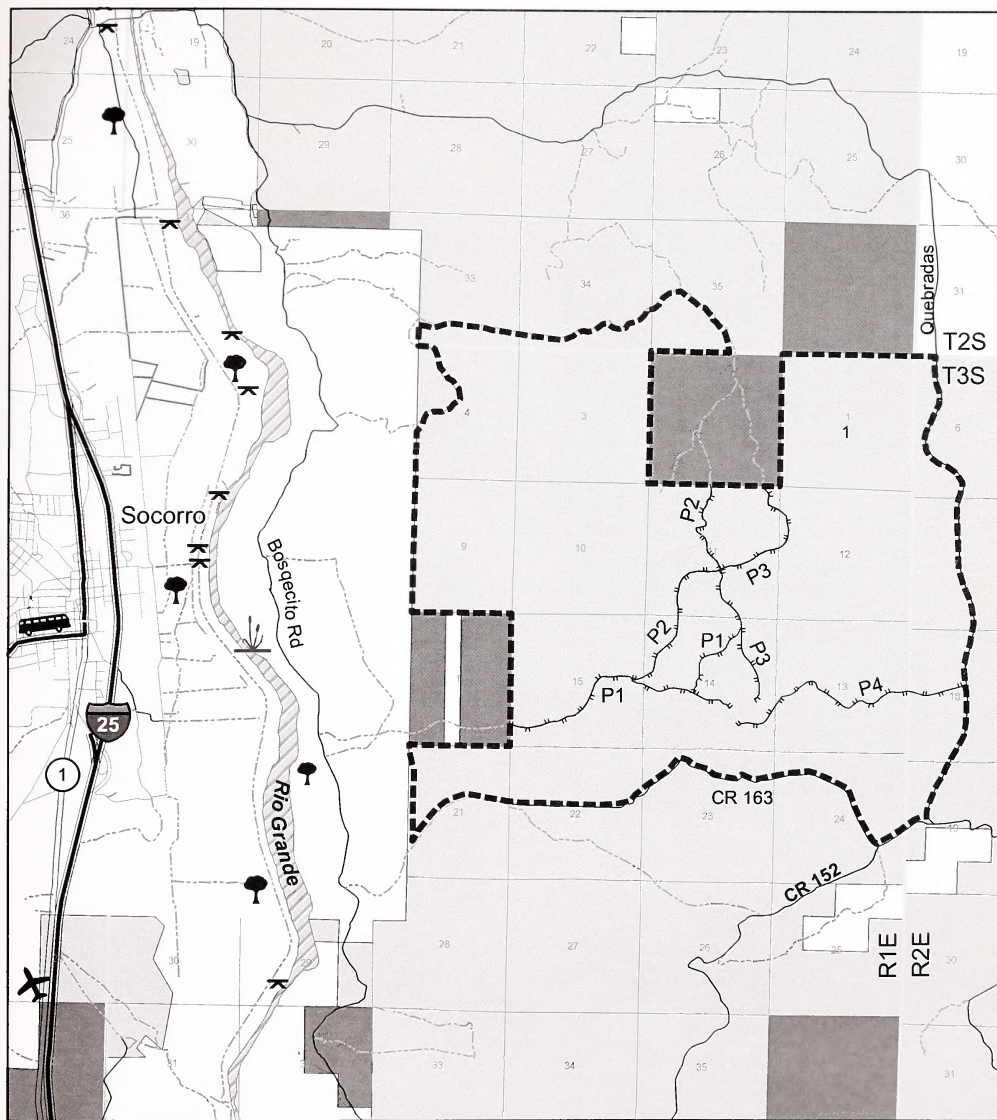
0 0.5 1 2 Miles



PRESILLA WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- + Close(Permit)
- + Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

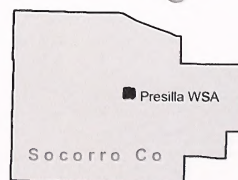
- BLM
- Private
- State

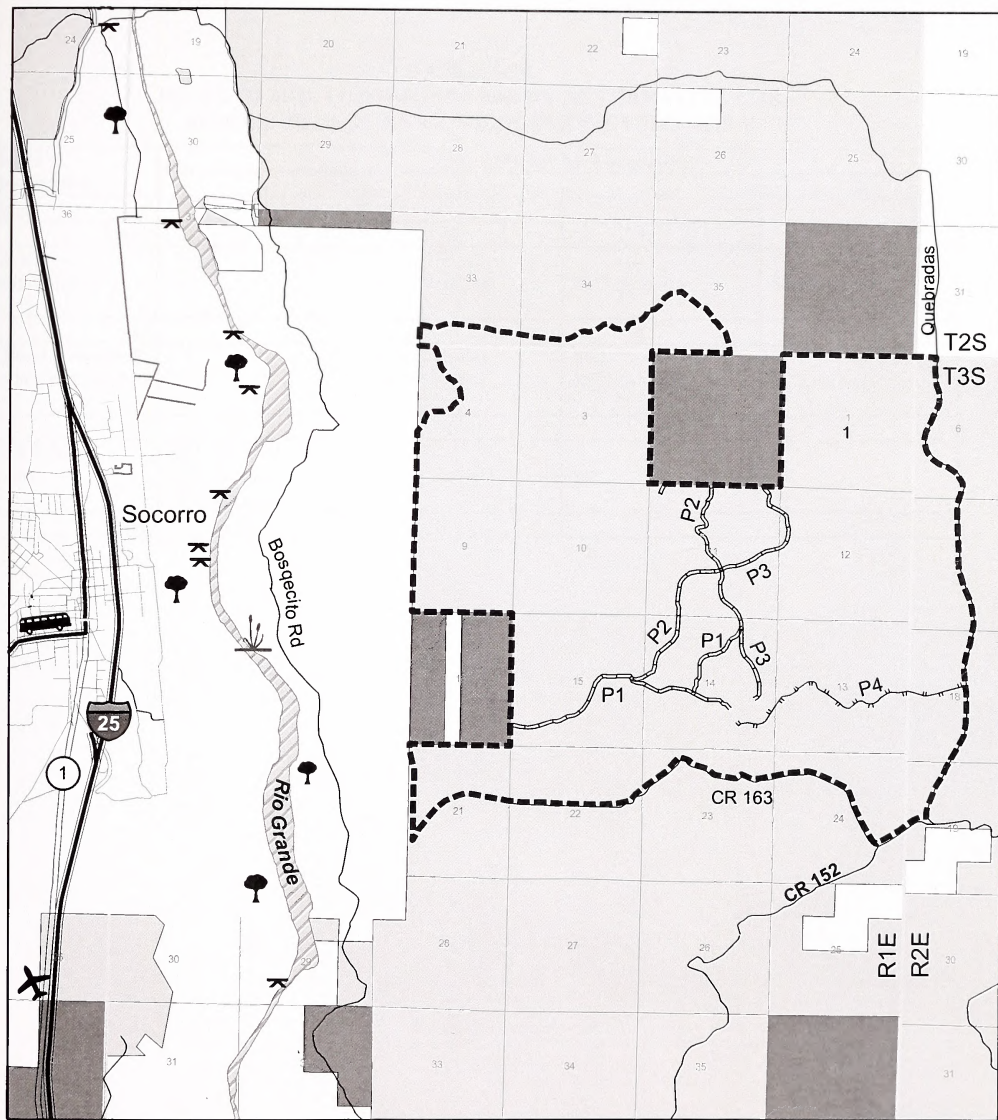
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN PRESILLA WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- + Close(Permit)
- + Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN PRESILLA WSA ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

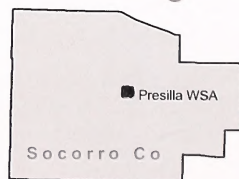
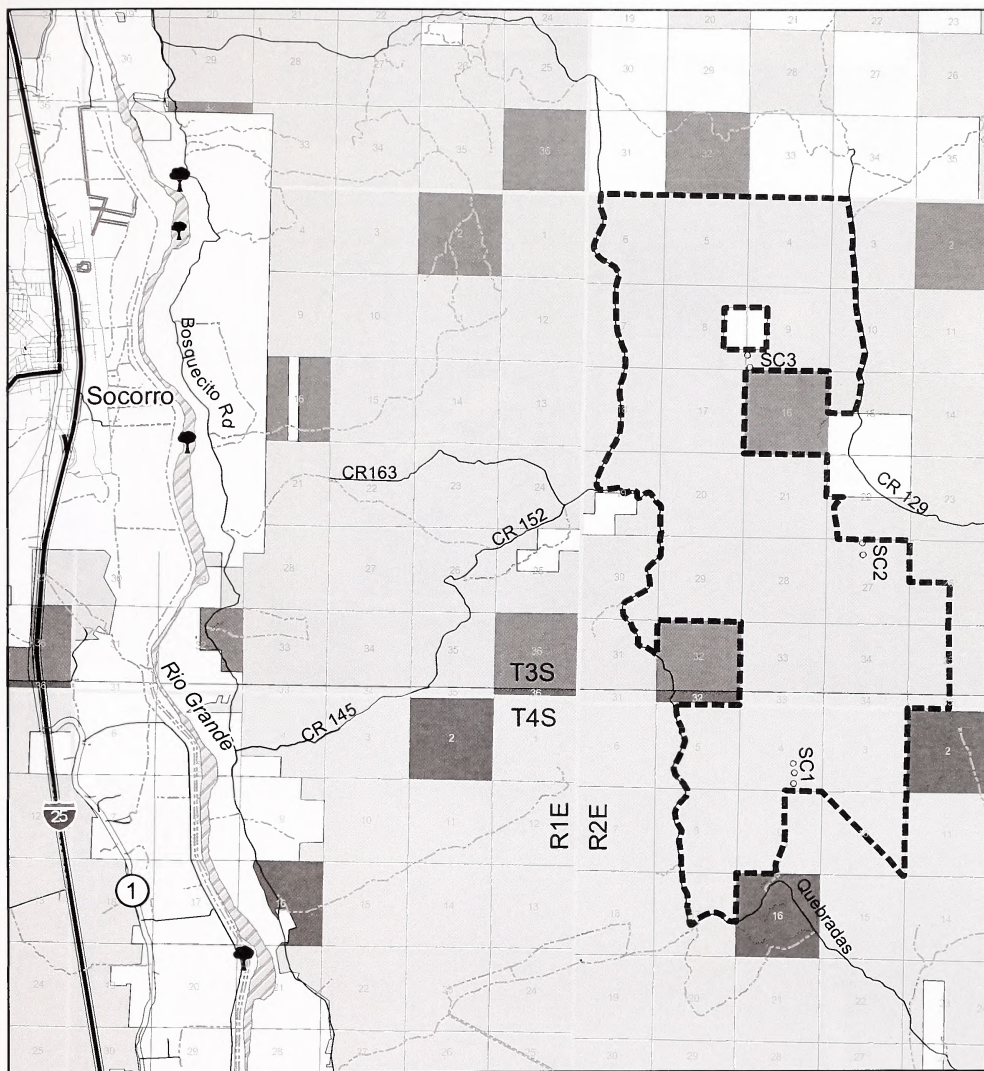


TABLE J-10
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
SIERRA DE LAS CAÑAS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open				
Total	0	0	0	0
Closed (rehabilitate)		SC2 (1/8 mile)	SC2 (1/8 mile)	SC (1/8 mile)
Total	0	1/8	1/8	1/8
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		SC1 (1/4 mile) SC3 (1/4 mile)	SC1 (1/4 mile) SC3 (1/4 mile)	SC1 (1/4 mile) SC3 (1/4 mile)
Total	0	1/2	1/2	1/2
Post WSA Route	SC1 (1/4 mile) SC2 (1/8 mile) SC3 (1/4 mile)			
Total	3/8 mile	0	0	0



Legend

- ■ ■ WSA
- Way
- ○ ○ ○ Post WSA Route

Land Status

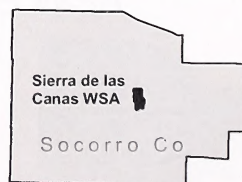
- BLM
- Private
- State

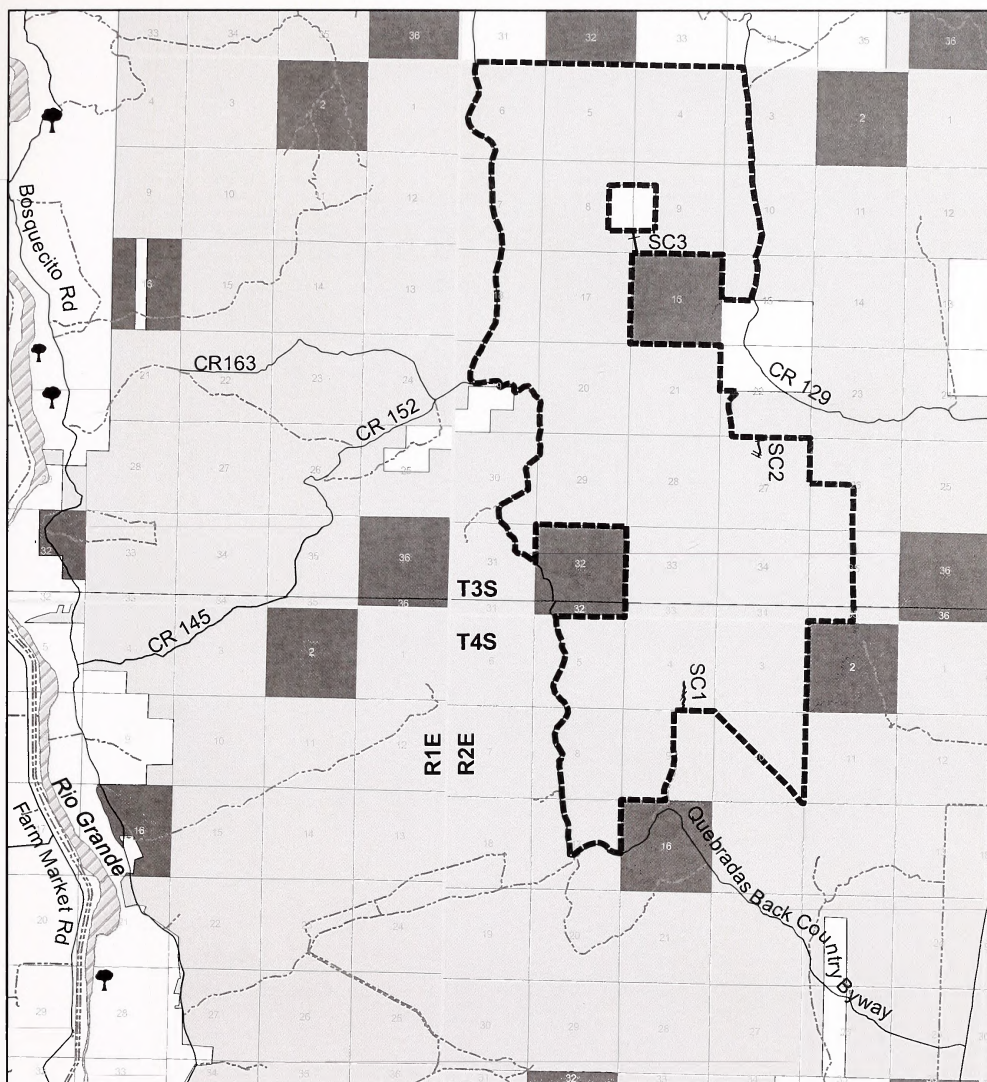
0 1 2 4 Miles

SIERRA DE LAS CANAS WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- ■ ■ WSA
- +— Close(Permit)
- +— Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

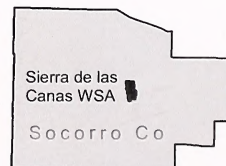
- BLM
- Private
- State

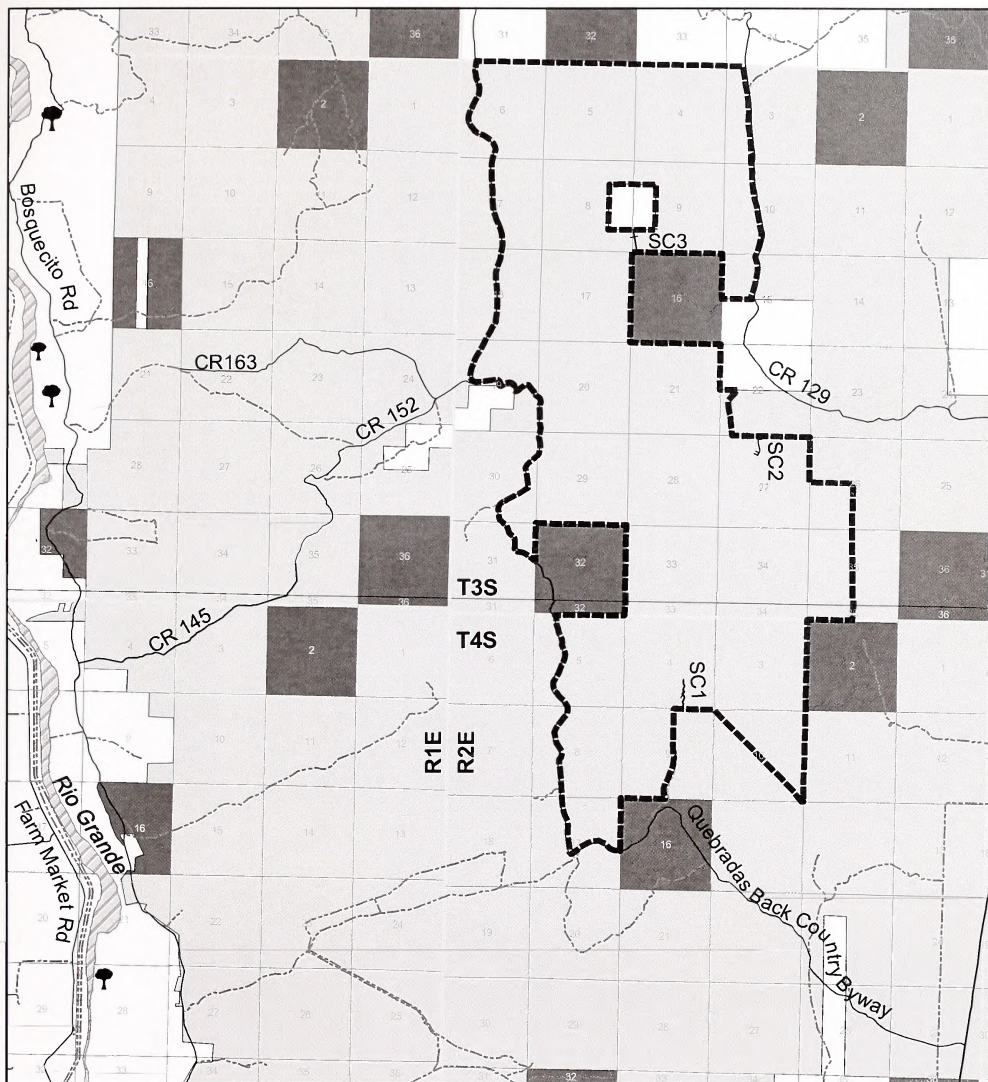
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA DE LAS CANAS WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- ■ ■ WSA
- +— Close(Permit)
- +— Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

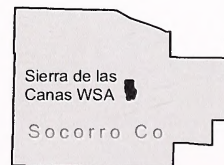
- BLM
- Private
- State

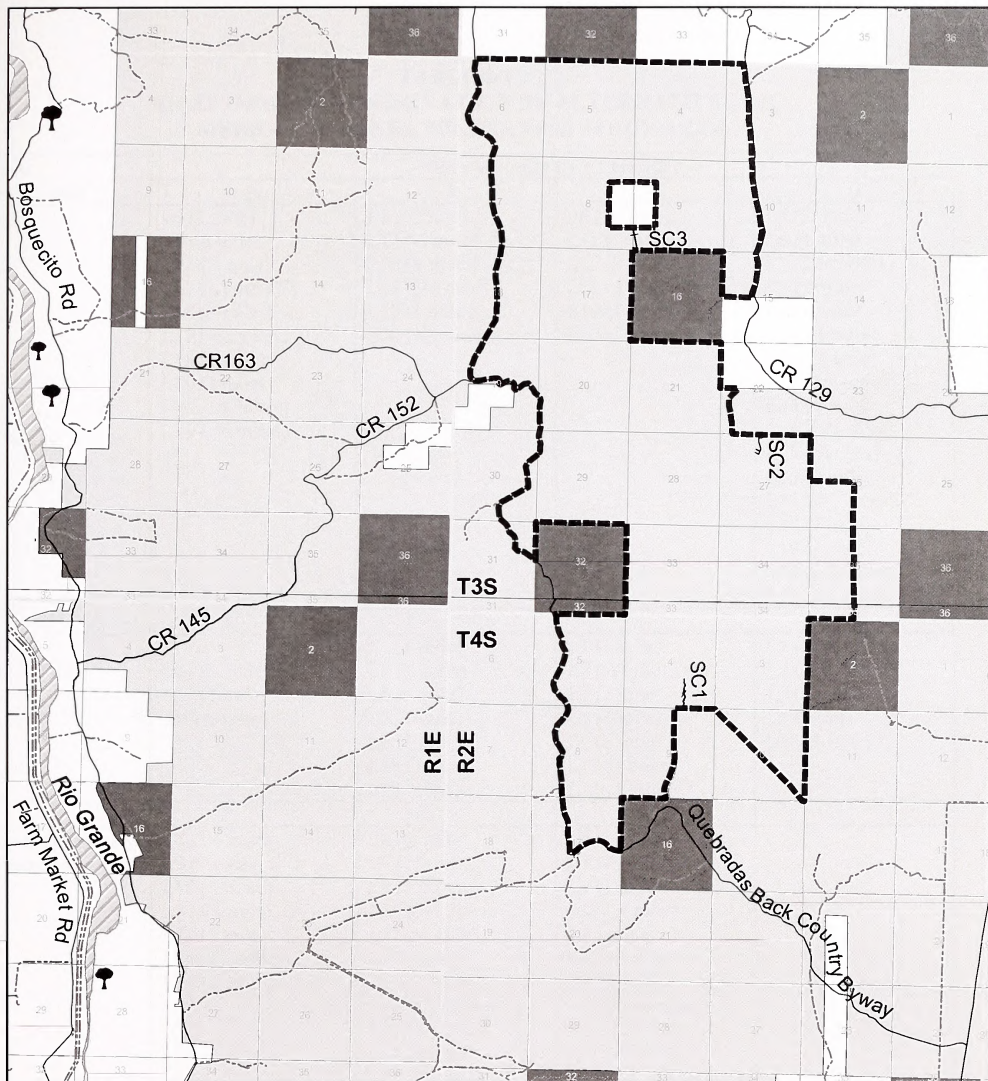
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA DE LAS CANAS WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





0 0.5 1 2 Miles



Legend

- WSA
- + + Close(Permit)
- + + Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA DE LAS CANAS WSA ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

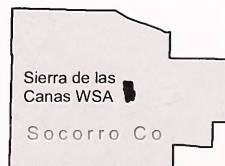
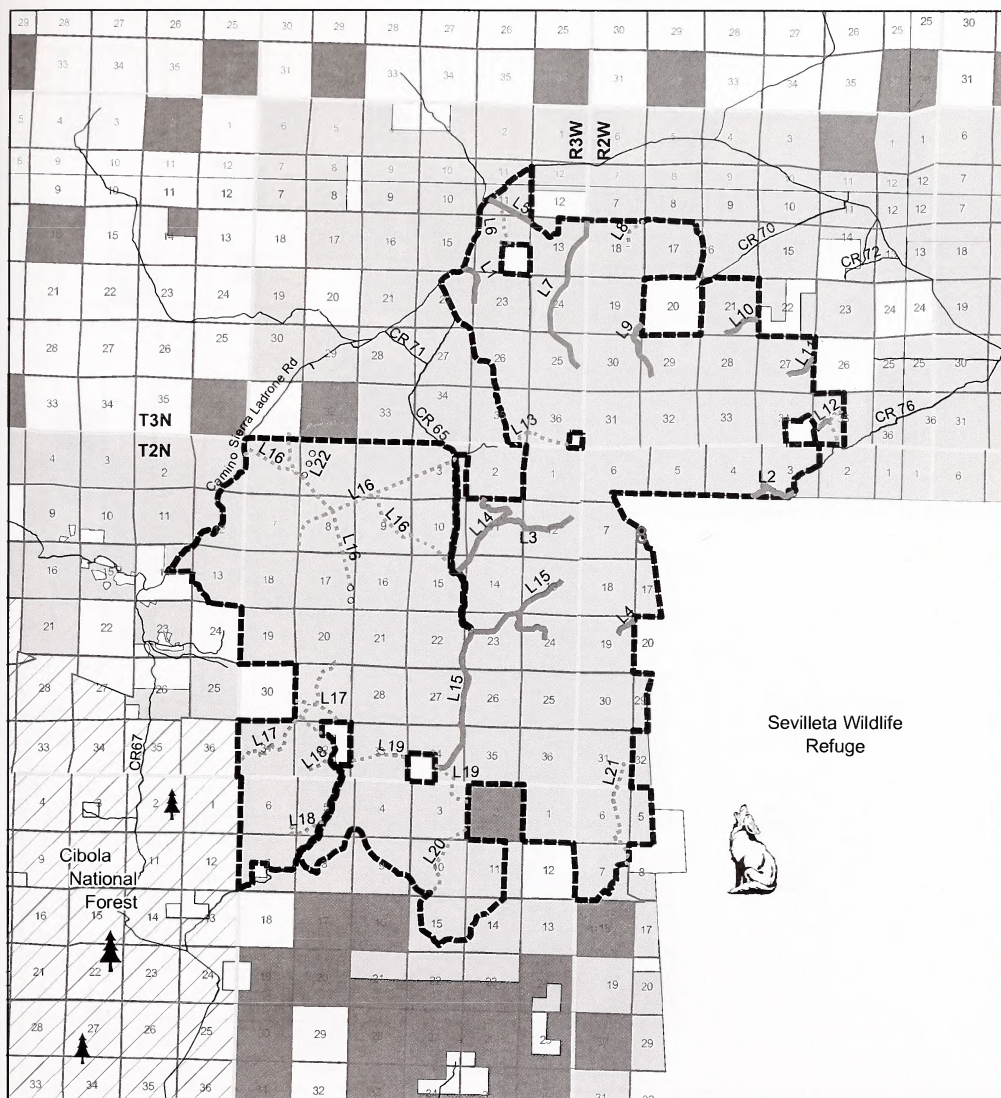


TABLE J-11
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
SIERRA LADRONES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	L6 (1 mile) L8 (¼ mile) L12 (¼ mile) L13 (1 mile-CS) L16 (9 miles) L17 (4½ miles) L18 (1 mile) L19 (1 mile) L20 (1½ miles) L21 (2½ miles)	L8 (¼ mile) L12 (¼ mile) L16 (9 miles) L17 (3½ miles) L19 (1 mile) L20 (1½ miles)	L8 (¼ mile) L12 (¼ mile) L16 (9 miles) L17 (3½ miles) L19 (1 mile) L20 (1½ miles)	L4 (½ mile) L6 (1 mile) L7 (2½ miles) L8 (¼ mile) L9 (1 mile) L10 (½ mile) L11 (¼ mile) L12 (1¼ mile) L13 (1 mile) L14 (1½ miles) L15 (6 miles) L16 (9 miles) L17 (4½ miles) L18 (1 mile) L19 (1 mile) L20 (1½ miles) L21 (2½ miles)
Total	22	15½	15½	35¼
Closed (rehabilitate)	*L2 (½ mile) *L3 (1 mile) L4 (½ mile)	L1 (1 mile) L2 (½ mile) L3 (1 mile) L5 (1 mile) L6 (1 mile) L18 (1 mile) L22 (1 mile)	L1 (1 mile) L2 (½ mile) L3 (1 mile) L5 (1 mile) L6 (1 mile) L18 (1 mile) L22 (1 mile)	L1 (1 mile) L2 (½ mile) L3 (1 mile) L5 (1 mile) L22 (1 mile)
Total	2	6½	6½	4½
Closed (permitted/ authorized only)	L7 (2½ miles) L9 (1 mile) L10 (½ mile) L11 (¼ mile) L12 (1 mile) L14 (1½ miles) L15 (6 miles)	L4 (½ mile) L7 (2½ miles) L9 (1 mile) L10 (½ mile) L11 (¼ mile) L12 (1 mile) L13 (1 mile) L14 (1½ miles) L15 (6 miles) L17 (1 mile) L21 (2½ miles)	L4 (½ mile) L7 (2½ miles) L9 (1 mile) L10 (½ mile) L11 (¼ mile) L12 (1 mile) L13 (1 mile) L14 (1½ miles) L15 (6 miles) L17 (1 mile) L21 (2½ miles)	
Total	12¼	17¼	17¼	0
*Post WSA Route	L1 (1 mile) L5 (1 mile) L22 (1 mile)			
Total	3	0	0	0

NOTE: CS = Cherry-stem Road



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- o o o o Post WSA Route
- Closed

Land Status

- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

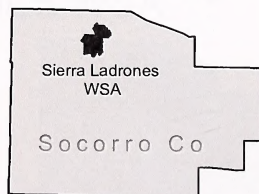
0 1 2 4 6 Miles

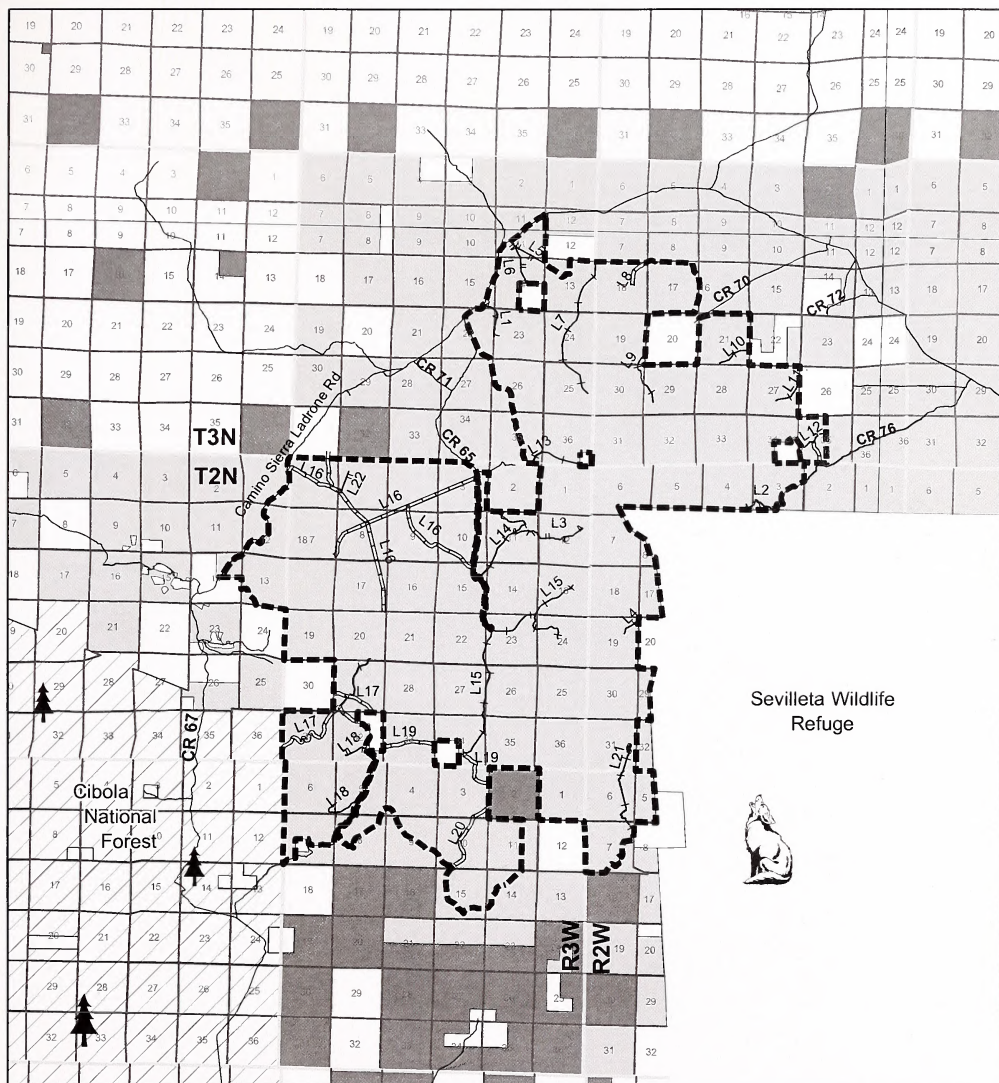
SIERRA LADRONES WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

Sevilleta Wildlife
Refuge





0 1 2 4 6 Miles

Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

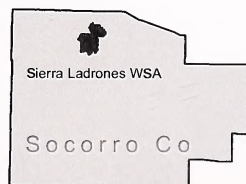
Land Status

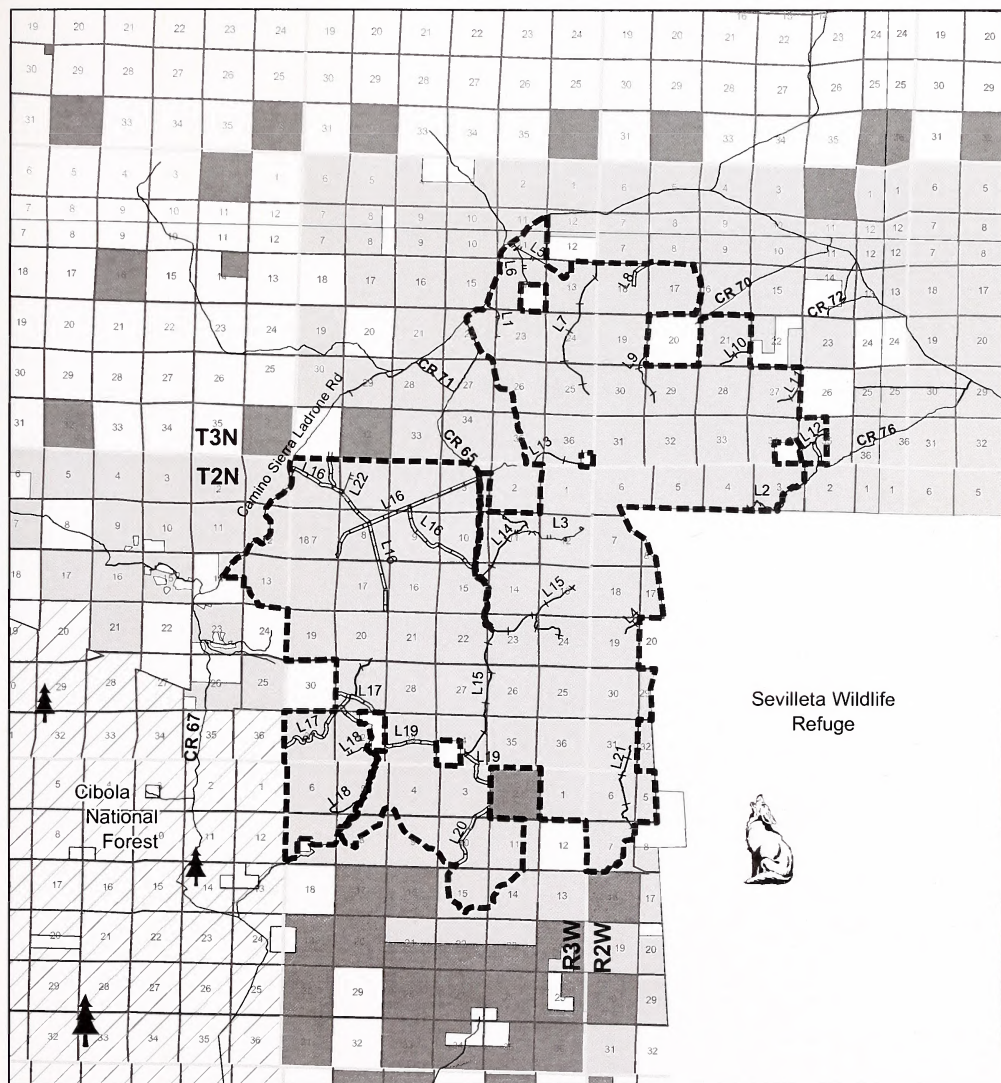
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State



ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA LADRONES WSA ALTERNATIVE B

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





0 1 2 4 6 Miles

Legend

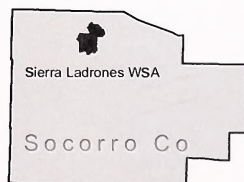
- WSA
- +--- Close(Permit)
- +--- Close(Rehab)
- Open
- Land Status
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

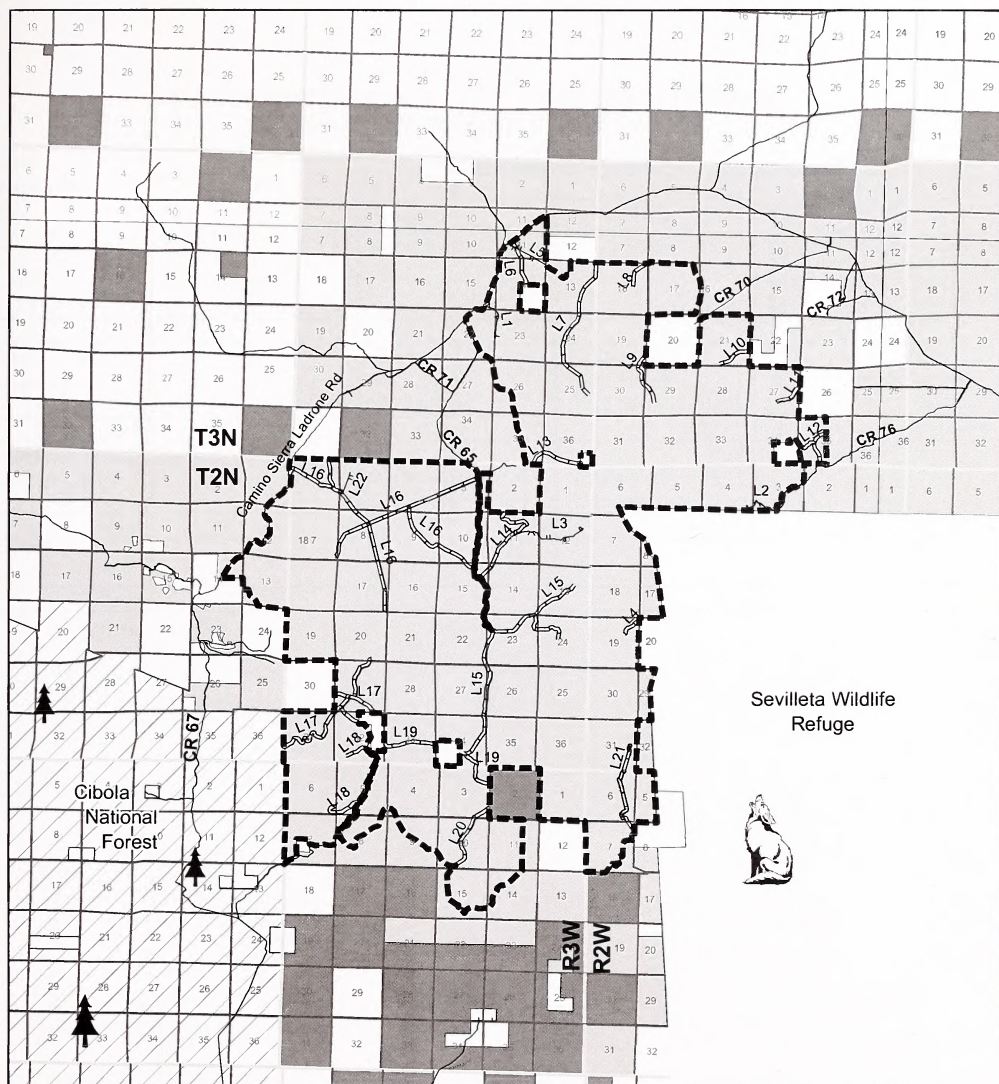
ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA LADRONES WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

Sevilleta Wildlife
Refuge





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open
- Land Status**
- BLM
- FS
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN SIERRA LADRONES WSA ALTERNATIVE D



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.

Sevilleta Wildlife
Refuge

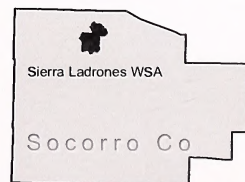
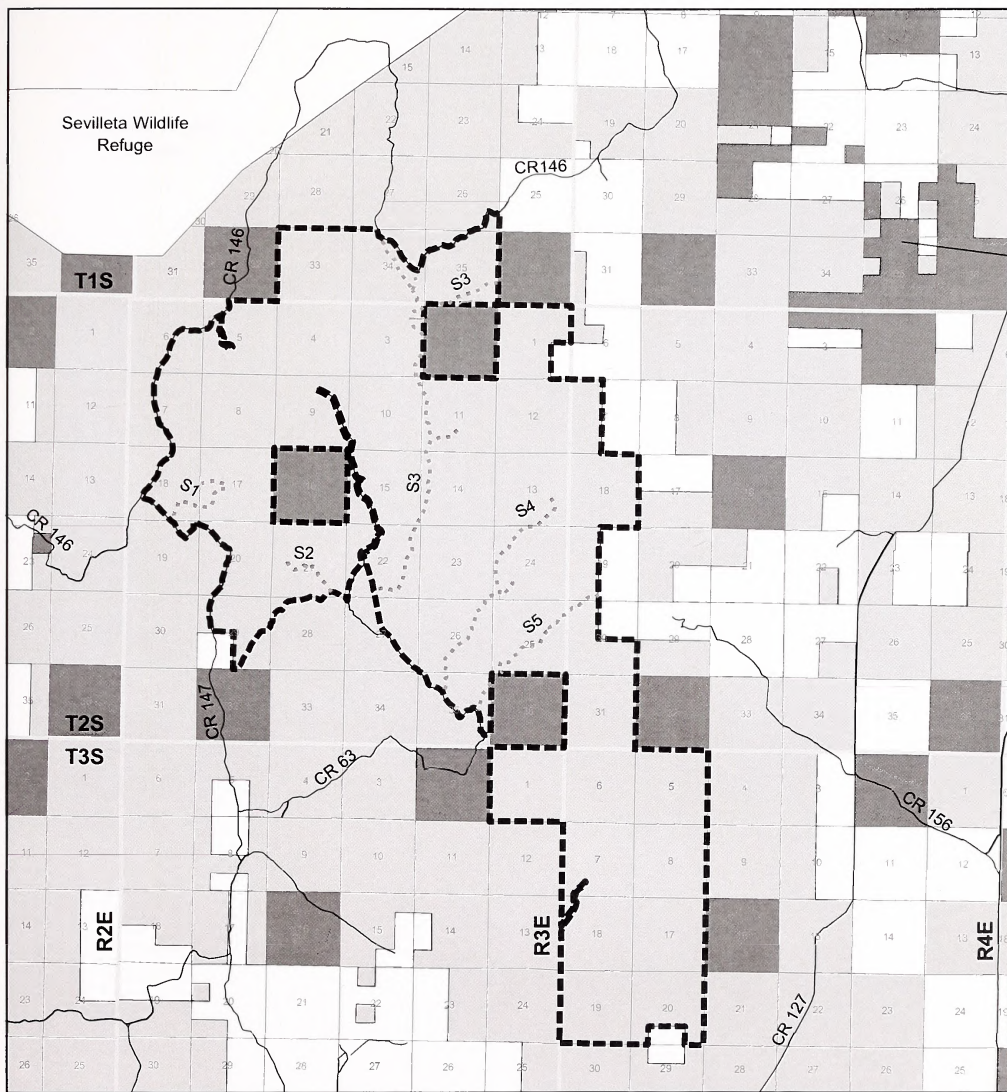


TABLE J-12
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
STALLION WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	S1 (2 miles) S2 (1 mile) S3 (8 miles) S4 (5 miles) S5 (3 miles)	S1 (2 miles)	S1 (2 miles)	S1 (2 miles) S2 (1 mile) S3 (8 miles) S4 (5 miles) S5 (3 miles)
Total	19	2	2	19
Closed (rehabilitate)		S2 (1 mile) S4 (5 miles) S5 (2 miles)	S2 (1 mile) S4 (5 miles) S5 (2 miles)	
Total	0	8	8	0
Closed (permitted/authorized only)		S3 (8 miles) S5 (1 mile)	S3 (8 miles) S5 (1 mile)	
Total	0	9	9	0
Post WSA Route				
Total	0	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

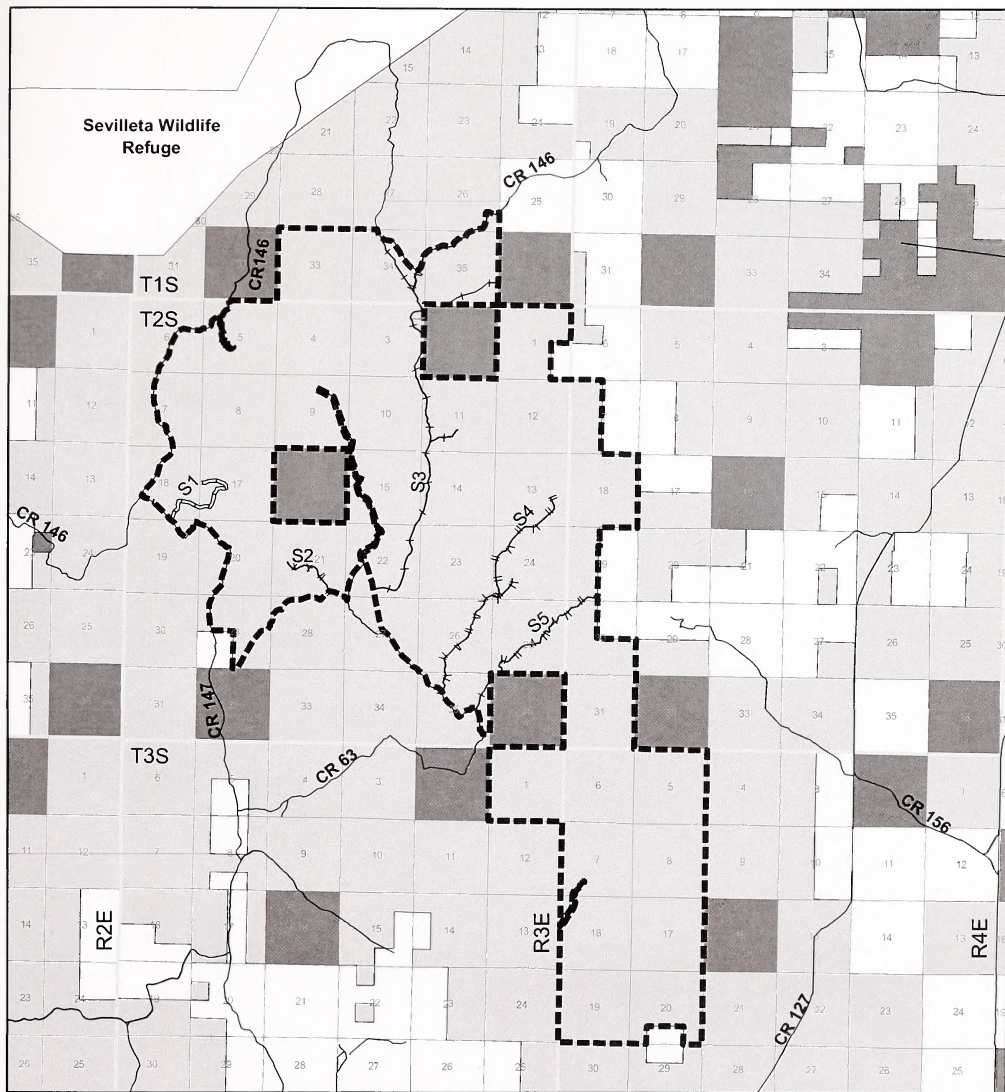
0 1 2 4 Miles

STALLION WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

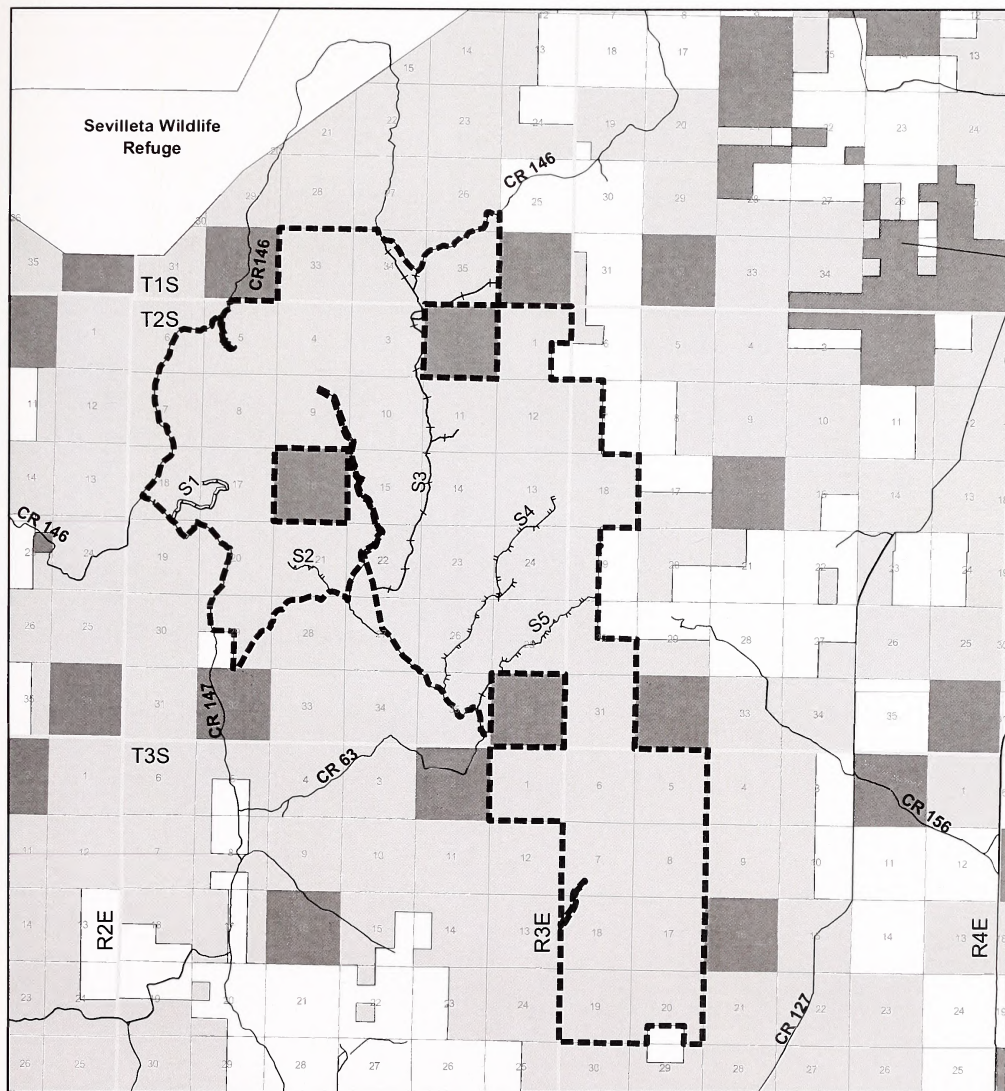
0 1 2 4 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN STALLION WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

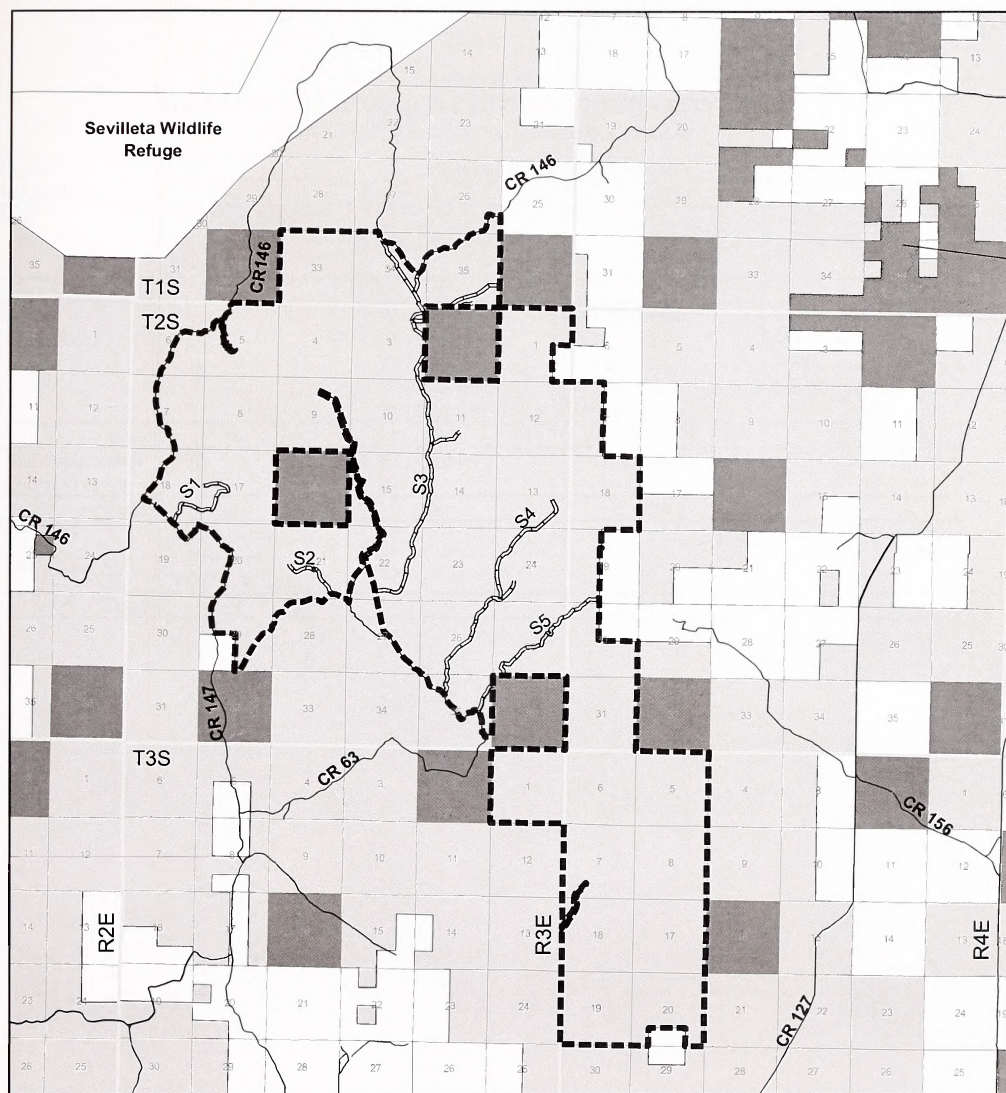


0 1 2 4 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN STALLION WSA ALTERNATIVE C

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State



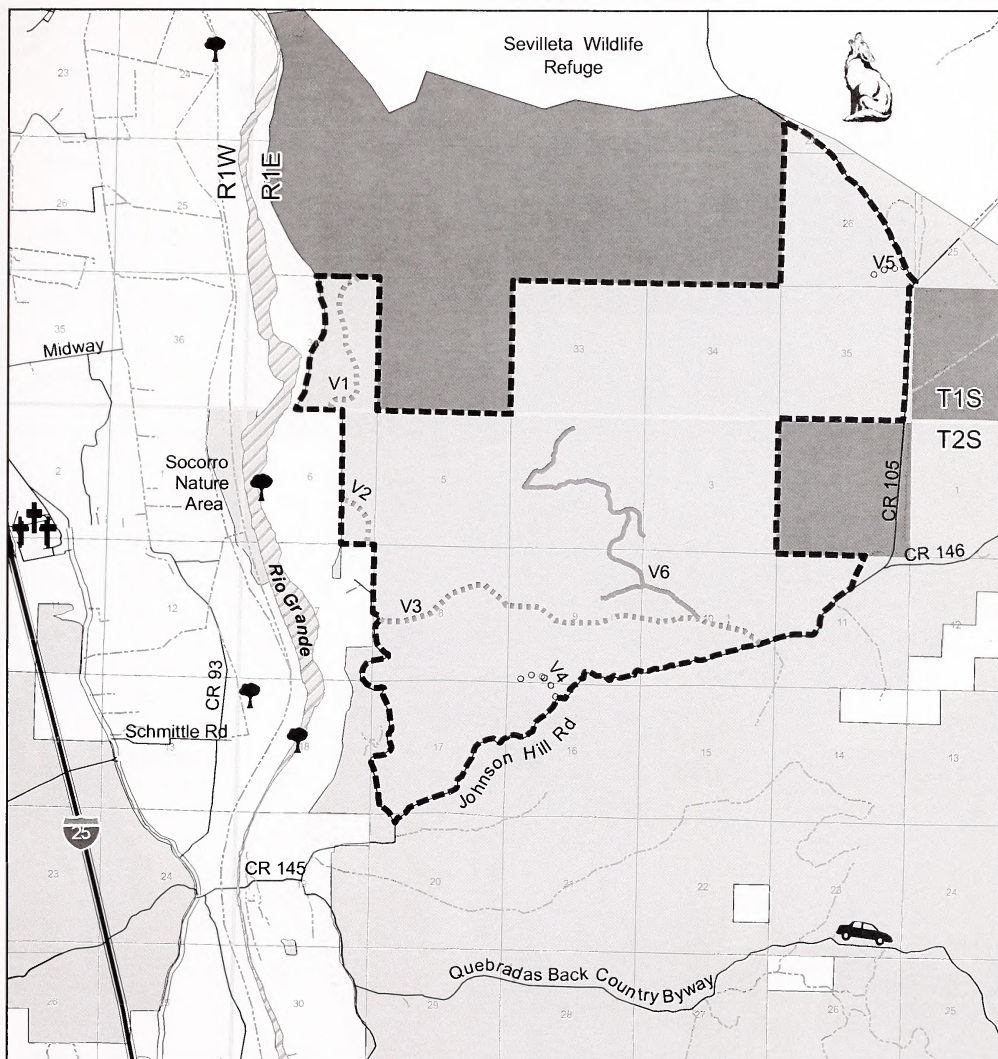
ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN STALLION WSA ALTERNATIVE D

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data



TABLE J-13
MILES OF ROUTE DESIGNATION BY ALTERNATIVE FOR
VERANITO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Route Designation	Miles of Route by Alternative			
	A	B	C	D
Open	V1 (1½ miles) V2 (½ mile) V3 (3 miles)			V1 (1½ miles) V2 (½ mile)
Total	5	0	0	2
Closed (rehabilitate)		V1 (1½ miles) V3 (3 miles) V4 (¼ mile) V5 (¼ mile) V6 (3½ miles)	V1 (1½ miles) V3 (3 miles) V4 (¼ mile) V5 (¼ mile) V6 (3½ miles)	V3 (3 miles) V4 (¼ mile) V5 (¼ mile) V6 (3½ miles)
Total	0	8½	8½	7
Closed (permitted/authorized only)	*V6	V2 (½ mile)	V2 (½ mile)	
Total	0	½	½	0
Post WSA Route	V4 (¼ mile) V5 (¼ mile) V6 (3½ miles)			
Total	4	0	0	0



Legend

- WSA
- Way
- oooo Post WSA Route
- Closed

Land Status

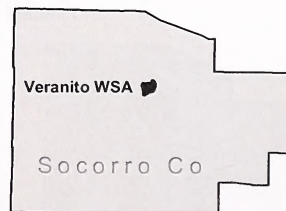
- BLM
- Private
- State

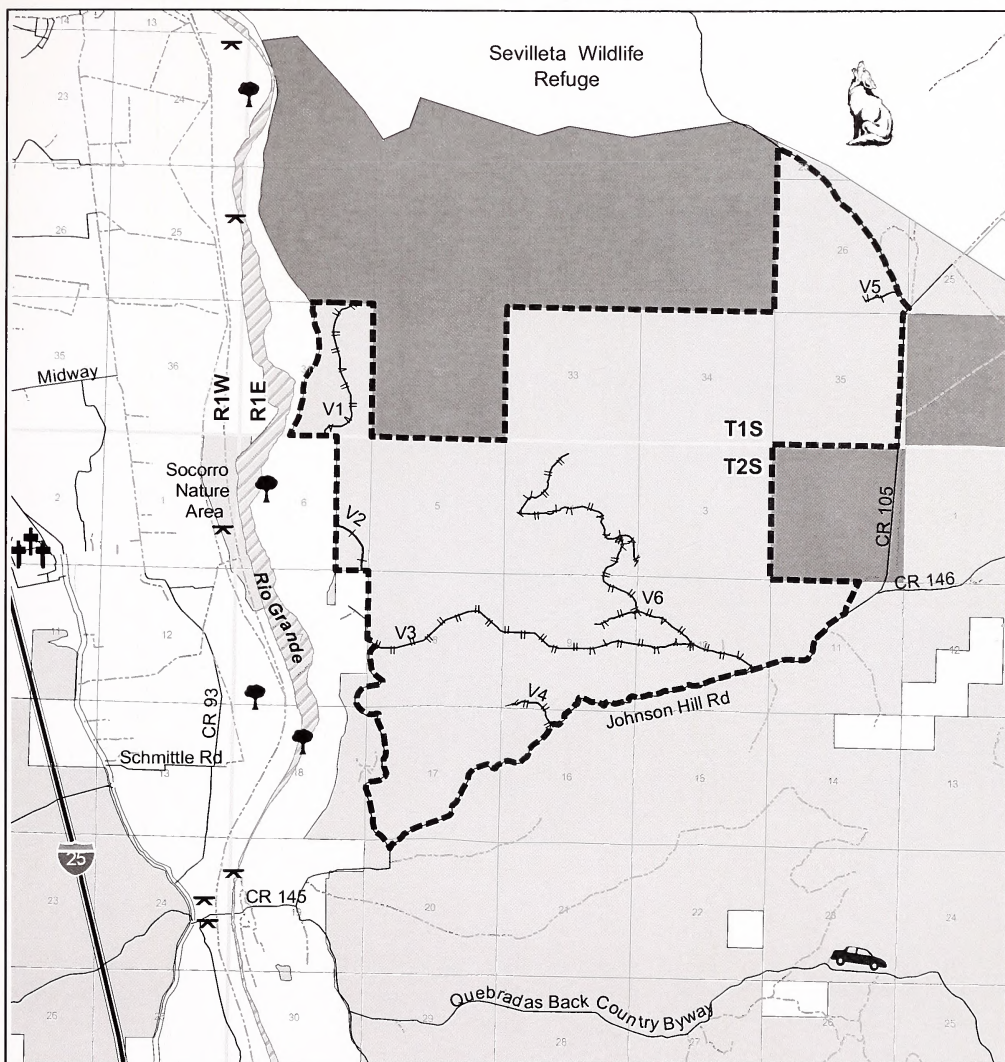
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

VERANITO WSA ROUTES ALTERNATIVE A



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- + Close(Permit)
- + Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

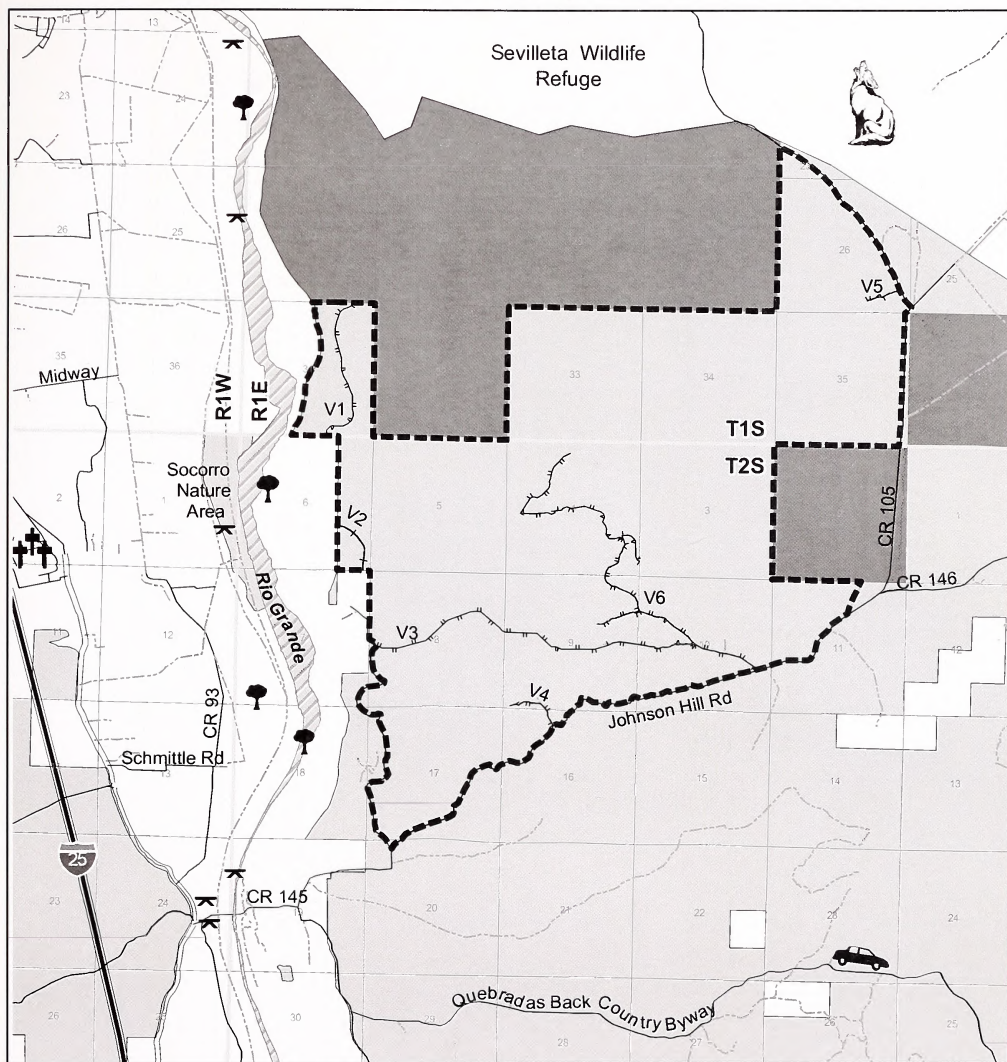
- BLM
- Private
- State

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN VERANITO WSA ALTERNATIVE B



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- Close(Permit)
- Close(Rehab)
- Open

Land Status

- BLM
- Private
- State

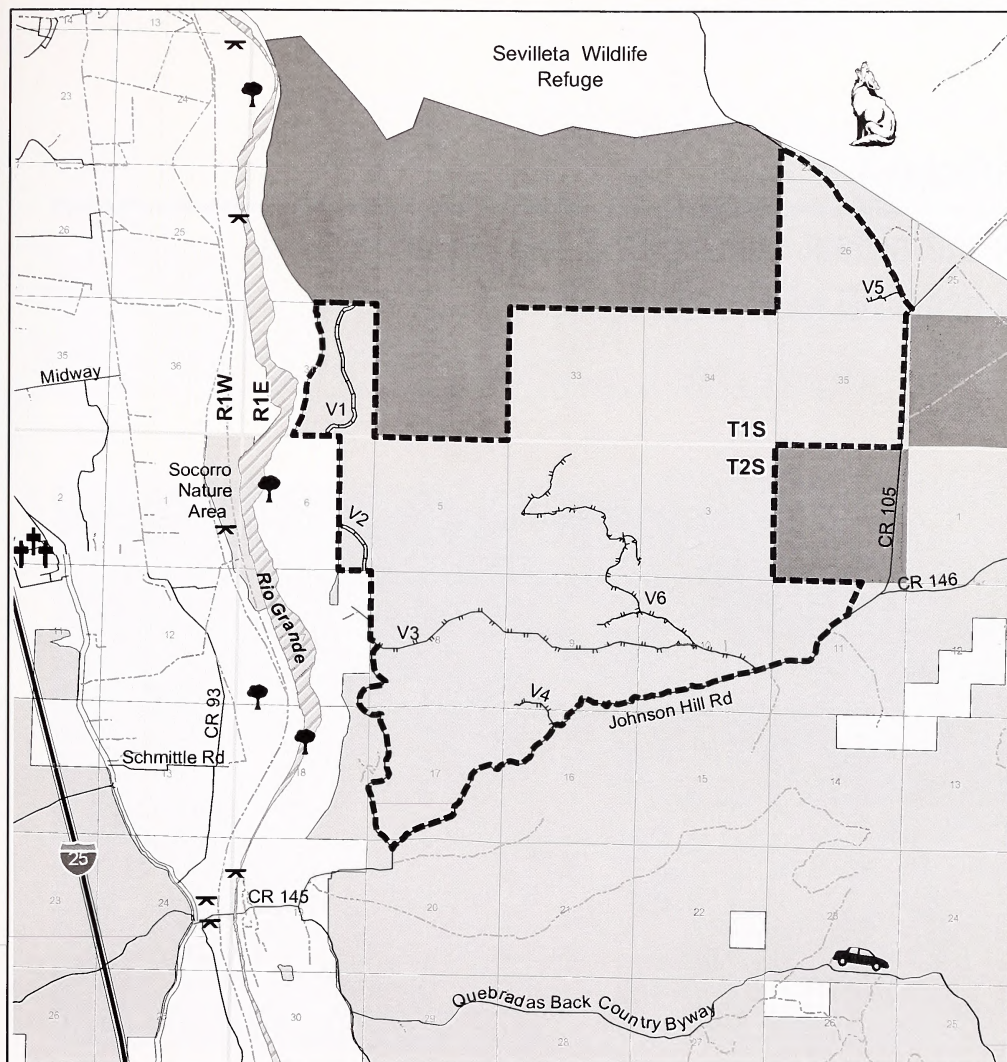
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN VERANITO WSA ALTERNATIVE C



No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.





Legend

- WSA
- +--- Close(Permit)
- +--- Close(Rehab)
- ==== Open

Land Status

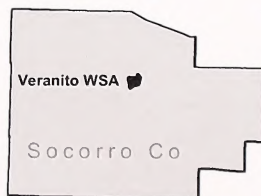
- BLM
- Private
- State



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN VERANITO WSA ALTERNATIVE D

No warranty is made by BLM
as to the accuracy, reliability,
or completeness of the data.



Appendix K

Existing Special Designations and Justification for Proposed Special Designations



APPENDIX K

EXISTING SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS AND JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

The following appendix contains (1) descriptions of the areas with special designations currently managed by the Socorro Field Office, (2) a description of the criteria and process for nominations for areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), and (3) descriptions and justifications for the proposed special designations. Acreages provided for the existing and proposed special designations are based on best available geographical information system (GIS) data and include only Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-managed lands. The acreages do not include State or privately owned inholdings that may be present within these areas. Differences between previous acreage estimates that were used in the 1989 Resource Management Plan (RMP) and current GIS-based estimates are summarized in Table 3-9, Acreages of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on BLM-Managed Surface Estate and Table 3-19, Acreages of Special Designations, in Chapter 3.

EXISTING SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

ACECs are designated by the BLM where special management attention is needed to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, and scenic values; fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes; or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards (BLM 2003). The six ACECs located within the Planning Area include Sawtooth, San Pedro, Ladron Mountain, Agua Fria, Horse Mountain, and Tinajas. These ACECs, except proprietary areas, are shown on Map 3-11, Special Designations: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Special Management Areas. The boundaries of the Sawtooth ACEC are proprietary due to the sensitivity of the resources being protected. A brief description of each ACEC is provided below.

Sawtooth Proprietary ACEC

The Sawtooth Proprietary ACEC, located in Catron County northwest of Datil, New Mexico, includes 125 acres of public land. Steep ridges and foot slopes characterize the area. This ACEC provides habitat for a small population of *Erigeron rhizomatous* (Rhizome fleabane or Zuni fleabane). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed this species as a threatened plant under the Endangered Species Act in 1985. The ACEC provides a refuge for this small population by protecting the area from damage from off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, right-of-way authorizations, mineral entry, or other potentially disturbing activities (BLM 1989).

The Sawtooth ACEC would be carried forward under all alternatives.

San Pedro Proprietary ACEC

The San Pedro Proprietary ACEC, located in Socorro County east of San Antonio, New Mexico, includes 1,201 acres of public land. Low ridges, slopes, arroyos, and watercourses characterize the area. This ACEC is habitat to *Amsonia fugatei* (BLM 1989), a species listed as a New Mexico Rare Plant by the New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council (2003). This species of *Amsonia*, native to the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico, consists of a few, generally small, isolated populations (BLM 1989). Protection of this isolated population is important because “no two populations are precisely alike and classification is a problem when comparing phenotypic variation within and between populations” (McLaughlin 1985, as referenced in BLM 1989).

The San Pedro ACEC would be managed as a Special Management Area (SMA) under Alternatives B, C, and D.

Ladron Mountain ACEC

The Ladron Mountain ACEC, located in the north-central portion of Socorro County, New Mexico, includes 57,195 acres of public land; several private and State Trust land inholdings are located within the ACEC. The jagged peaks of the Sierra Ladron provide a prominent landmark as they rise from the Rio Grande Valley, from approximately 5,200 feet to an elevation of 9,176 feet. This rough topography, coupled with extreme vegetative diversity, makes the Sierra Ladron critical to the protection of raptor wintering and nesting habitat, and for dwindling mule deer populations (BLM 1989). The Ladron Mountain ACEC contains habitat for rare and endemic, State-listed sensitive plant species including the threadleaf false carrot (*Aletes filifolia*), planks catchfly (*Silene Dlankii*), and Wrights spiderlily (*Tradescantia wriczhtii*) (BLM 1989). The Ladron Mountain ACEC has served as an area for the successful reintroduction of desert bighorn sheep, a New Mexico State endangered species. This ACEC serves to protect habitat for various species of wildlife and plants, as well as geologic, recreational, paleontological, and scenic values. The Ladron Mountain ACEC overlaps with portions of the Sierra Ladrones WSA.

The area managed as an ACEC would be expanded under Alternatives B and C, while the ACEC boundaries under Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A.

Agua Fria ACEC

The Agua Fria ACEC, located in Catron County west of Quemado, New Mexico, includes 9,571 acres of public land. State Trust land and private inholdings also are present in the ACEC. Elevation varies from 6,400 feet to 7,600 feet, with the majority of the ACEC characterized by mesas and open grasslands enhanced by volcanic features and vertical cliffs (BLM 1989). The Agua Fria Canyon and associated rimrocks and cliffs provide habitat for a great number of raptor species including bald eagles, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and prairie falcons (BLM 1989). The ACEC is a long, wide, grass-covered valley bottom bordered with vertical basalt and sandstone cliffs, which provide unique visual resources and recreation opportunities (BLM 1989). In addition to the habitat values, the ACEC contains a large number of archaeological sites (i.e., petroglyphs, campsites, and villages) (BLM 1989). The ACEC serves to protect raptor wintering and nesting habitats, recreational opportunities, and geologic and scenic values. The Agua Fria ACEC overlaps with portions of the Mesita Blanca WSA and Eagle Peak WSA.

The area within this ACEC would be incorporated in other designations under Alternatives B and C, and this ACEC is eliminated under Alternative D.

Horse Mountain ACEC

The Horse Mountain ACEC, which is located in Catron County, southwest of Datil, New Mexico, includes 7,490 acres of public land. The majority of the ACEC is characterized as an area of rugged canyons and rough mountainous country with elevations ranging from 7,650 feet to 9,490 feet. The ACEC is relatively remote and rarely grazed, resulting in good habitat conditions for a variety of wildlife species. This ACEC has been identified as providing potential habitat for bald eagles and peregrine falcons (BLM 1989). This ACEC serves to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat, as well as recreational, scenic, and geologic values (BLM 1989). The Horse Mountain ACEC overlaps with portions of the Horse Mountain WSA.

The area managed as an ACEC would be expanded under Alternatives B and C, while the ACEC boundaries under Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A.

Tinajas ACEC

The Tinajas ACEC, located east of Socorro, New Mexico, includes 3,463 acres of public land. The ACEC centers on a narrow incised canyon, within which lies the Arroyo del Tajo Pictograph Site. This ACEC serves to protect the pictographs for public interpretation and sociocultural values (BLM 1989). The Tinajas ACEC overlaps with portions of the Presilla WSA.

The area managed as an ACEC would be expanded under Alternatives B and C, while the ACEC boundaries under Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A.

BACKCOUNTRY BYWAY

The Quebradas National Backcountry Byway, designated by the BLM in 1990, is located in Socorro County, New Mexico. The Quebradas National Backcountry Byway is a 24-mile drive along scenic colored cliffs, rock formations, and badlands with glimpses of the Rio Grande and surrounding mountains. The Byway can be accessed from Interstate 25 (I-25) and U.S. Highway 380 (US 380). The Byway currently is used most frequently for mountain biking and OHV riding. Surrounding uses include hiking, cultural resources viewing, livestock grazing, and wildlife management areas (e.g., wildlife refuges). This byway is shown on Map 3-11. Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the area around the byway would be managed as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

NATIONAL TRAILS

The Planning Area includes one Congressionally designated National Historic Trail and one National Scenic Trail (i.e., El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, respectively). A brief description of each follows.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail

The El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail recognizes the primary route between the colonial Spanish capital of Mexico City and the Spanish provincial capitals at San Juan de Los Caballeros (1598-1600), San Gabriel (1600-1609), and then Santa Fe (1610-1821) (BLM 2002). This historic road was in existence for more than 300 years and played a vital role in the settlement of the southwestern United States. The United States Congress and New Mexico State Legislature appropriated funds for the construction of an International Heritage Center to commemorate this historic road (BLM and New Mexico State Monuments Division 2001). This trail is shown on Map 3-11. All alternatives for this RMP Revision (RMPR) allow for corridors for a future trail through primarily private and State lands.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail climbs and descends the peaks of the Rocky Mountains from Canada to Mexico, traversing mountainside meadows, granite peaks, and high desert saddles. As the trail winds through New Mexico, it crosses arid desert, rugged forested mountains, canyonlands, and lava flows. Two segments of this trail are located within Catron County, but only one is located primarily on public land. These segments of the trail are shown on Map 3-11. The southernmost segment is located primarily within the Pelona Mountain SMA and Continental Divide WSA, which overlap substantially. Within the Pelona Mountain SMA, BLM developed about 34 miles of primitive trail, between 1990 and 1991 (Carson 2003). Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the area around the trail would be managed as an SMA.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

The public land within the Planning Area does not contain any river segments listed or suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

WILDERNESS

Wilderness located within the Cibola National Forest includes the Withington and Apache Kid Wilderness Areas. Wilderness located within the Gila National Forest includes the Blue Range, Gila, and Aldo Leopold Wilderness Areas. Designated wilderness located within the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge includes the Indian Wells, Chupadera, and Little San Pascual Wilderness Areas. There are currently no designated BLM wilderness areas within the Planning Area.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

The 13 WSAs located on public land within the Planning Area include Antelope, Continental Divide, Devil's Backbone, Devil's Reach, Eagle Peak, Horse Mountain, Jornada del Muerto, Mesita Blanca, Presilla, Sierra De Las Cañas, Sierra Ladrones, Stallion, and Veranito. These WSAs are shown on Map 3-6, Wilderness Study Areas. When BLM acquires lands within a WSA, that land is managed as part of the WSA. Six of the 13 WSAs partially overlap with other specially designated areas. If areas of overlap were released from further consideration as wilderness, these areas would be managed according to the prescriptions for the ACEC or SMA (see also Table 2-3 which outlines management of WSAs if they are released from wilderness review).

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

SMAs are areas that have been identified by the BLM for the management of a specific resource or resources. Twenty-one SMAs are located within the Planning Area. Fifteen of these SMAs are shown on Map 3-11; the boundaries of six SMAs – Iron Mine Ridge, Taylor Canyon, Newton Site, Playa Pueblos, Mogollon Pueblo, and Mockingbird Gap – are proprietary due to the sensitivity of the resources being protected. A brief description of each SMA is provided below.

Soaptree SMA

The Soaptree SMA is located approximately 27 miles southeast of San Antonio, New Mexico. The SMA includes 1,296 acres of public land just north of the Jornada del Muerto WSA. The area was designated as an SMA because of the large amounts of yucca, which provide aesthetic and recreational values for wildlife viewing, sightseeing, and hiking (BLM 1989). The Soaptree SMA would be carried forward under all alternatives.

Harvey Plot SMA

The Harvey Plot SMA is located on 8 acres of public land northeast of Bingham, New Mexico. The area was established as a study plot to provide information to determine the effect of rodents on native vegetation as well as study the ecology of range for rainfall and soil types (BLM 1989). This SMA serves to provide vegetative use data for future scientific use (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, this designation would be eliminated since it no longer requires special management.

Stallion SMA

The Stallion SMA, located about 8 miles east of Socorro, New Mexico, includes 19,702 acres of public land. Private and State Trust land inholdings occur in the SMA. The western part of the SMA encompasses the Sierra de las Cañas and Presilla WSAs. The SMA is varied in landscape with a rugged desert mountain range characterized by sheer rock escarpments, deep narrow canyons, ridges, mesa tops, broken badlands, rolling piñon-juniper, and grass covered hills (BLM 1989). Resources within the SMA include multiple vegetative communities for range and forestry, wildlife, cultural, mineral, and recreational resources (BLM 1989). This SMA serves to protect a critical watershed area through erosion control and the minimization of surface-disturbing activities. The Stallion SMA overlaps with portions of the Sierra de las Cañas WSA.

The area managed as an SMA would be reduced under Alternatives B, C, and D.

Puertecito SMA

The Puertecito SMA is located about 40 miles northwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The SMA includes 7,153 acres of public land, which does not include inholdings. The central portion of the SMA consists of deep alluvial flats, fans, and low hills. There is a series of low basalt dikes running north to northwest through this lowland area, while the Rio Salado drains eastward through the southern part of the SMA (BLM 1989). This SMA serves to protect a critical watershed area through erosion control and the minimization of surface-disturbing activities.

The Puertecito SMA would be carried forward under all alternatives.

Fence Lake SMA

The Fence Lake SMA is located about 20 miles northwest of Quemado, New Mexico. The SMA includes 25,453 acres of public land, which does not include the private and State Trust land inholdings present. There are three major landforms: the nearly level mesa tops, steep sandstone and shale escarpments and hills, and gently sloping alluvial fans and drainage ways. The soils and topography in the area's watershed are subject to headcutting, soil piping, and sheet erosion, resulting in numerous continuous and discontinuous gullies (BLM 1989). Resources found within the SMA include wildlife, range, forestry, cultural, and minerals (a small portion of the SMA lies within the maximum coal-potential area) (BLM 1989). This SMA serves to protect a critical watershed area through erosion control and the minimization of surface-disturbing activities.

Under Alternatives B and C, this area would be incorporated into another ACEC, while the SMA boundaries under Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A.

Pelona Mountain SMA

The Pelona Mountain SMA is located about 29 miles southwest of Datil, New Mexico on 70,838 acres of public land. The SMA overlaps with the western portion of the Continental Divide WSA, which is characterized by rugged canyons and rough, hilly-to-mountainous country. The SMA has been identified as providing potential habitat for bald eagles, peregrine falcons, black-footed ferrets, and many other species of wildlife including a large number of big-game species (BLM 1989). Bat Cave, a highly significant archaeological site on the National Register, is located within the Pelona Mountain SMA (BLM 1989). The Pelona Mountain SMA serves to protect elk, deer, and raptor wintering and nesting habitats; geologic, scenic, and recreational values; and the Bat Cave cultural site (BLM 1989). It overlaps with portions of the Continental Divide WSA.

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the area under special management would be expanded and designated as an ACEC.

Iron Mine Ridge Proprietary SMA

The Iron Mine Ridge Proprietary SMA, located northeast of Bingham, New Mexico, includes 1,386 acres of public land. The SMA serves to protect several species of rare and endemic plants that occur in the area, including Wright's spiderlily (*Tradescantia Wrightii*), desert parsley (*Pseudocymopterus longiradiatus*), threadleaf false carrot (*Aletes filifolius*), and other State-listed sensitive species (BLM 1989).

Under all Alternatives B, C, and D, this designation would be dropped due to downlisting of the special status plant species.

Taylor Canyon Proprietary SMA

The Taylor Canyon Proprietary SMA, located east of Bingham, New Mexico, includes 384 acres of public land. The SMA serves to protect several species of rare and endemic plants that occur in the area, including threadleaf horsebrush (*Tetradymia filifolia*), gypsum blazing star (*Mentzelia perrenis*), and other State-listed sensitive species (BLM 1989).

Under all Alternatives B, C, and D, this designation would be dropped due to downlisting of the special status plant species.

Fort Craig SMA

The Fort Craig SMA, located south of San Marcial, New Mexico, occupies 149 acres of public land. Fort Craig was founded in 1854 as one of the first and largest military strongholds in the Territory of New Mexico (BLM 1989). The Fort Craig SMA serves to protect cultural resource values, public interpretation and recreational opportunities, and potential future scientific use (BLM 1989).

The Fort Craig SMA would be carried forward under all alternatives.

Teypama SMA

The Teypama SMA is located on 37 acres of public land south of Socorro, New Mexico. The Teypama Piro pueblo ruin, which is located in the SMA, is a late-prehistoric and early-historic habitation site of the Piro Indians, who occupied the central Rio Grande Valley at the time of Spanish contact (BLM 1989). Though the SMA has experienced damage in the past from vandals, the area serves to protect cultural resources and opportunities for public interpretation and future scientific investigation (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the area under special management would be reduced and renamed as the Penjacu SMA.

Newton Site Proprietary SMA

The Newton Site Proprietary SMA is located on 37 acres of public land within Catron County. The SMA consists of a 150- to 200-room pueblo, a large, double-walled kiva or plaza, and associated outlying room blocks (BLM 1989). Though the site has been previously disturbed, the SMA serves to protect cultural resources and opportunities for public interpretation and future scientific investigation (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, this SMA would be expanded.

Playa Pueblos Proprietary SMA

The Playa Pueblos Proprietary SMA is located on 203 acres of public land in Socorro County. The SMA consists of two major prehistoric pueblo ruins probably associated with the Tompiro prehistoric culture area (BLM 1989). One of the pueblos has been vandalized in the past, but the other is virtually intact (BLM 1989). Though the site has been previously disturbed in the past, the SMA serves to protect cultural resources and opportunities for public interpretation and future scientific investigation (BLM 1989).

The Playa Pueblos SMA would be carried forward under all alternatives.

Rio Salado SMA

The Rio Salado SMA, located approximately 8 miles west of Ladron Mountain, includes 5,946 acres of public land. The Rio Salado SMA includes many known archaeological sites representative of developmental and early puebloan occupation along the middle Rio Salado drainage (BLM 1989). In addition to these cultural resource values, the SMA serves to protect an unusual plant community and two limestone cave formations (BLM 1989). The Rio Salado SMA overlaps with portions of the Sierra Ladrones WSA.

Under Alternatives B and C, the area within this SMA is incorporated into another ACEC, while the SMA boundaries under Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A.

Town of Riley SMA

The Town of Riley SMA is located on the Rio Salado, north of Magdalena, New Mexico. This SMA includes 533 acres of public land. The SMA surrounds a ghost town originally known as Santa Rita, which was a town settled in the 1880s by Spanish-American homesteaders from Socorro and other villages along the Rio Grande (BLM 1989). This SMA serves to protect historical properties important to the "Followers of Santa Rita" (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B and D, this designation would be eliminated in order to evaluate whether there is a need for special management in this area.

Mogollon Pueblo Proprietary SMA

The Mogollon Pueblo Proprietary SMA, located northwest of Quemado, includes 640 acres of public land. This SMA includes one of the southernmost Chacoa Great House communities. The site, which was occupied from about A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1150, includes a number of large room blocks with internal kivas, a great kiva, and numerous associated middens and petroglyph panels (Duff 2002). Vandals have damaged the site and the SMA was designated to protect the ruins and petroglyphs for scientific investigation and possible public interpretation in the future (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the area within this SMA would be incorporated into other designations.

Mockingbird Gap Proprietary SMA

The Mockingbird Gap Proprietary SMA is located on 8,685 acres of public land in Socorro County. The Mockingbird Gap site within the SMA is listed as a New Mexico State Cultural Property and consists of an extensive complex of Paleoindian campsites including both Clovis and Folsom elements (ca. 10,000 B.C.) (BLM 1989). Paleoindian sites are rare, and this multicomponent site provides special opportunities

for research in the Southwest (BLM 1989). The SMA serves to protect cultural resources for future scientific investigation (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, this area would be managed as a proprietary ACEC.

Zuni Salt Lake SMA

The Zuni Salt Lake SMA is located northwest of Quemado, New Mexico. The SMA includes 4,839 acres of public land. The SMA is a location of traditional religious significance to the Zuni Tribe and to other Native American groups in the Southwest (BLM 1989). The lake itself lies in a volcanic crater and contains highly saline water, which has been used since prehistoric times. This SMA serves to protect sociocultural values and cultural resources (BLM 1989). The Zuni Salt Lake SMA overlaps with portions of the Eagle Peak WSA.

Under Alternatives B and C, the area under special management would be expanded and designated as an ACEC. Under Alternative D, the boundaries of the area would be similar to Alternative A but the area would be designated as an ACEC.

Cerro Pomo SMA

The Cerro Pomo SMA is located west of Quemado, New Mexico, entirely within the Eagle Peak WSA. The SMA includes 8,784 acres of public land and contains significant cultural values. Diverse wildlife, vegetation, and landforms occur within the SMA (BLM 1989). The SMA serves to protect cultural and geologic resources, while providing and improving wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Under Alternatives B and D, the area under special management would be expanded and designated as an ACEC. Under Alternative C, this area would be incorporated into another ACEC.

Walnut Canyon SMA

The Walnut Canyon SMA is located about 12 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico. The SMA includes 1,145 acres of public land, which does not include the State Trust Land inholdings present. The SMA is characterized by a rugged canyon and associated rough foothill country. The landscape is rugged and exhibits the diversity of color, vegetation, relief, shape, and geology characteristic of desert foothill mountain communities dissected with long, deep, and wide-arroyo-type canyons (BLM 1989). The diverse vegetation and terrain provide habitat for a variety of big game species and other wildlife including golden eagles, prairie falcons, and great horned owls (BLM 1989). The SMA serves to protect raptor wintering and nesting habitat and geologic, recreational, and scenic values (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, this designation would be eliminated since it was determined to not require special management.

The Box SMA

The Box SMA is located about 6 miles southwest of Socorro, New Mexico, and includes 300 acres. Local rock climbers use the area on a regular basis, and climbers from other states and countries also often visit the SMA (BLM 1989). The SMA provides recreational opportunities, while serving to protect scenic quality in the area (BLM 1989). About 40 acres of this SMA have been withdrawn from entry for locatable minerals (Bell 2003).

Under Alternatives B and C, the area under special management would be expanded and designated as an SRMA. Under Alternative D, the boundaries of the area would be similar to Alternative D, but the area would be designated as an SRMA.

San Lorenzo Canyon SMA

The San Lorenzo Canyon SMA is located about 10 miles northwest of Socorro, New Mexico. It includes 2,320 acres of public land. The SMA is characterized by the presence of a rugged, scenic canyon bordering the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. Due to its proximity to Socorro, it offers excellent day use opportunities (BLM 1989). The SMA provides recreational opportunities, while serving to protect wildlife habitat, cultural resources, and scenic values (BLM 1989).

Under Alternatives B and C, this area would be incorporated into other designations. Under Alternative D, this area would be designated as an SRMA.

Datil Well Campground SMA

BLM manages the Datil Well Campground SMA to provide camping opportunities in a roaded natural setting and to provide interpretative and educational opportunities. Consistent with a 1989 RMP decision, BLM developed the *Datil Well Campground Recreation Management Plan* in 1992. The management actions implemented in the SMA include limiting motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails, restricting the area from right-of-way authorizations and leases, and prohibiting surface occupancy for fluid mineral leasing. In addition, BLM has withdrawn 640 acres of the SMA from entry for locatable minerals and prohibits woodcutting in the area, fulfilling 1989 RMP decisions.

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, this area would be managed as an SRMA.

NOMINATIONS FOR AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Regulations – 43 CFR 1610.7-2

Guidance – BLM Manual 1613.1

ACEC nominations may be made by members of the public, or other agencies or internally by BLM personnel. Potential ACECs must meet **both** of the following criteria:

1. **Relevance** – An area meets the relevance criteria if it contains one or more of the following:
 - Significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (such as rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans)
 - A fish or wildlife resource (such as habitat for endangered, sensitive or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity)
 - A natural system or process (such as endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian or rare geological features)
 - Natural hazards (such as areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined during the planning process that it has become part of a natural process.
2. **Importance** – The described value, resource, system, process or hazard must have substantial significance and values. Generally, this means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

- Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern (particularly when compared to any similar resource)
- Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change
- Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)
- Has qualities that warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare
- Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property

To be designated as an ACEC, an area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values. Special management attention refers to management prescriptions or measures developed during preparation of a planning document to protect the important and relevant values of an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP. A management measure is considered to be "special" if it is unique to the area involved and includes terms and conditions specifically to protect the important and relevant values of a specific area. Special management often provides for consultation and coordination with identified groups and/or experts having interest or expertise in the affected values.

Publication: The State Director, upon approval of a draft RMP, plan revision, or plan amendment shall publish a notice in the *Federal Register* listing each ACEC proposed and specify the resource use limitations, if any, which would occur if it were formally designated. The notice shall provide a 60-day period for public comment on ACEC designations. Approval of the RMP, plan revision, or plan amendment constitutes formal designation. The approved plan shall include the general management practices and uses, including mitigating measures, identified to protect designated ACECs.

DESCRIPTIONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR DESIGNATION OF AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Multi- Resource Nominations Management Team Review January 12, 2003

I. Cerro Pomo (Acreage varies across alternatives)

Reasons for Nomination: Cultural Values, Recreational and Paleontological

It should be noted that this proposed ACEC includes the existing 9,571-acre Agua Fria ACEC, the 640-acre Mogollon Pueblo SMA, and 8,784-acre Cerro Pomo SMA.

ACEC Nomination includes: Alternative B (26,284 acres)
Alternative D, proprietary (449 acres)

Relevance (meets 3 of 6 criteria): Significant cultural values
Significant scenic values
Natural system or process

Justification

- Home to southernmost Chacoan greathouse community
 - National Register of Historic Places
- Multi-year cultural research project ongoing
- High level of public interest
- Cultural sites are of national significance
- High scenic value
- World class paleontological resources
- Unique geologic features
- Special management is needed for resources protection
- Potential threats from oil and gas, coal, carbon dioxide, and helium development
 - Entire area has moderate potential for oil and gas
 - Potential for coal is high (a large portion of the nominated area lies within an identified coal field)
 - Approximately 50 percent of the area has a high potential for carbon dioxide and helium
 - Southeastern portion has moderate potential for coalbed methane
- Potential threat to resource from surface-disturbing activities (e.g., mineral material disposal, rights-of-way, and OHV)
- Natural system (little impact from man)
-

Importance – Meets 13 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance	Is unique	Public concern
Management concern	Is sensitive	National priority
Is irreplaceable	Is exemplary	FLPMA mandate
Is fragile	Is threatened	
Is rare	Is vulnerable	

Management Team Review/Suggestion

Threats: Erosion, Roads, Air Quality

Recommended for Nomination as proposed

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

II. Tinajas (Arroyo del Tajo (Acreage varies across alternatives)

Reasons for Nomination: Recreational and Cultural Values
Cultural resource site falls within the expanded Tinajas ACEC.

ACEC Nomination includes: Alternative B (1,062 acres)
Alternative C (7,767 acres)
Alternative D (22 acres)

Relevance (meets 3 of 6 criteria): Significant cultural values
Significant scenic values
Natural system or process

Justification

- Unique assemblage of pictographs (images painted on rock)
 - Stereophotographic technique used to record figures in 1980s
- Sacred Native American Pueblo site and ceremonial figures
- High level of public interest
- Significant research site to scientists
- High scenic value
- Unique geologic formations and sinkhole features (Tinajas)
- Opportunity for recreation (e.g., hiking and other non-disturbing activities)
-
- Quebradas Backcountry Byway under National Backcountry Byway Program
- High scenic values, and natural systems are threatened by vehicle conflicts

Importance – Meets 12 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance	Is unique	Is rare
Management concern	Is sensitive	Is vulnerable
Is irreplaceable	Is exemplary	Public concern
Is fragile	Is threatened	FLPMA mandate

Management Team Review/Suggestion

- WSA acreages not recommended for designation
- Controlled OHV use needed since OHV use is threat
- Recommended for Nomination as proposed, with following addition: Alternative D to propose that expansion area be considered in whole or in part for designation as a National Recreation Area.

Recommended for Nomination as proposed

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

III. Ladron Mountain – Devil’s Backbone (includes San Lorenzo Canyon and Rio Salado)

Reasons for Nomination: Recreation, Wildlife, Cultural

ACEC Nomination includes: Alternative B (57,474 acres)

Alternative C (57,474 acres)

Alternative D (20,155 acres)

It should be noted that this proposed ACEC includes the existing 5,946-acre Rio Salado SMA and the 2,320-acre San Lorenzo SMA. The proposed ACEC includes several areas that are addressed separately below: Ladron Mountain, Devil’s Backbone, and San Lorenzo.

Ladron Mountain Area

Relevance (meets 5 of 6 criteria): Significant cultural value
Significant scenic value
Significant historic value
Significant fish or wildlife resource
Natural system or process

Justification

- Area contains three State sensitive plant species (e.g., *Aletes filifolia*, *Silene plankii* and *Tradescantia wrightii*).
 - Originally the ACEC nominated by New Mexico Energy and Minerals and Natural Resource Division and the Nature Conservancy for management of rare and endemic plants
 - Great Basin and Chihuahuan floras overlap in the area, resulting in unusually plant communities
 - Area contains unique riparian habitat associated with several natural springs (10 to 12)
 - Provides habitat for residential and non-residential wildlife species
 - Critical habitat of State-listed desert bighorn sheep
 - Should be managed as federally listed per guidance under the Endangered Species Act
 - Since being re-introduced to the Ladron Area, sheep have expanded their range to include Polvadera Mountain and Sarca Mesa Area
 - San Lorenzo Canyon, Polvadera Mountain Area, and Sarca Mesa are now "core habitat" for the desert bighorn sheep and is a core travel corridor between the Ladron Mountains and the Devil's Backbone (which is a proposed future release site for the State-listed desert bighorns)
 - Special protection and management will help maintain and enhance genetic diversity and viability of desert bighorn herds and increase the probability of a self-sustaining population of the species
 - Habitat for several special status bat species
 - Should receive special protection to prevent future listing as a federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act
 - Habitat for dwindling mule deer population
 - Special management and protection needed to prevent further habitat fragmentation and degradation and to protect critical habitat and maintain viability of the mule deer population. Studies are ongoing to determine if ACEC is critical habitat for other special status species.
 - The nominated area’s visual rating has been designated as a Class I or II
 - High scenic values
 - High recreation values
 - Unique geological resources
 - Areas contain paleontological resources
 - Unique, varied archaeological sites (range from early puebloan occupation, Indian Wars, and the Civil Wars)
4. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

Importance – Meets 9 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance

Is irreplaceable

Is unique

Is sensitive

Is fragile

Is threatened

Is rare

Is vulnerable

Public concern

Management Team Review/Suggestion

Threats: Urbanization/subdivisions, increased recreation use, fuels reduction, military activities, moderate potential for oil and gas

Devil's Backbone Area

Reasons for Nomination: Wildlife

Relevance (meets 1 of 6 criteria): Significant fish or wildlife resource

Justification

- Critical habitat for State of New Mexico Endangered desert bighorn sheep
 - Travel corridor between Ladron Mountain and the Devil's Backbone WSA (located at south end of Magdalena Mountains)
 - Future release site for desert bighorn sheep
 - Should be managed as federally listed per guidance under the Endangered Species Act
- Special protection and management of the proposed ACEC needed to
 - Aid in maintaining and enhancing genetic diversity and viability and therefore, a healthy, self sustaining desert bighorn sheep population
 - Protect wildlife habitat from further loss and fragmentation resulting from urbanization, energy exploration and development, unauthorized OHV use, and other similar activities that result in degradation of existing habitat
- Volunteer and BLM investments to enhance wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities in the area
 - Activates include prescribed fire, piñon-juniper thinning, wildlife water facilities, spring restoration, and enhancement and grassland restoration
 - Habitat for dwindling mule deer population
- Special management and protection needed to prevent further habitat fragmentation and degradation and to protect critical habitat and maintain viability of the mule deer population
- Adjacent acquired lands have wilderness character

Importance – Meets 8 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance

Is unique

Management concern

Public concern

Is rare

FLPMA concern

National priority

Is irreplaceable

Management Team Review/Suggestion

Recommend nomination as proposed to be included in larger Sierra Ladron-San Lorenzo ACEC. The larger ACEC will include Sierra Ladron, San Lorenzo, and Rio Salado for Alternative B. Recommend adding this area to the combined ACEC, which would include Ladron, San Lorenzo, and Rio Salado under Alternative C. Need to include a fourth alternative (e.g., Alternative D).

Threats: Low potential for oil and gas, low potential for carbon dioxide and helium, medium geothermal potential, medium potential for saleables

Rio Salado Area

Relevance (meets 3 of 6 criteria): Significant historic value, significant cultural value, significant scenic value

Provide a brief description of the specific relevance values (such as the specific endangered species and/or the habitat essential to maintain species diversity):

This area contains significant prehistoric sites, including a high density of P-II roomblocks that are essential to our understanding of Anasazi cultural development and its local expression. The Rio Salado is also a natural travel corridor and contains significant sites related to its function as such. Many historic period sites having both national significance and an extremely high level of public interest also are

present, including the retreat route of General Sibley's Confederates after the battle of Glorieta, Indian War sites involving Apaches and Buffalo Soldiers, and other sites related to the area's function as a travel corridor.

Importance – Meets 9 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance	Is unique	Management concern
Public concern	Is rare	Is sensitive
Is vulnerable	Is irreplaceable	Is fragile

Provide a brief description of the importance of the resource(s) requiring special management attention. See explanation in paragraph above.

Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

The sites with great importance as described above are very vulnerable, and many are difficult or impossible to detect with routine surface inventory that is generally employed as part of the section 106 National Historic Preservation Act process. Designation would afford a higher level of protection and indicate a management priority in terms of protection, research, and interpretation.

Special management prescriptions are measures needed to protect the relevant values of an ACEC. At least one prescription is required for each nominated ACEC (BLM Manual 1613). Management prescriptions can vary across plan alternatives. Different management strategies set forth by the different prescriptions for the various alternatives will be analyzed in the environmental impact statement (EIS).

Please provide a description of management prescriptions or measures needed for the ACEC. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

Controlled surface use:

Increased surveys would be required, including archival work to identify sensitive areas lacking in surface manifestations.

These measures are warranted by the national significance, vulnerability, scientific and interpretive potential described above, as well as by the high degree of public interest in these values.

Recommended for Nomination to include expanded Ladron, San Lorenzo, and Rio Salado areas

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

IV. Horse Mountain (Acreage varies across alternatives)

Reasons for Nomination: Recreation, Wildlife

ACEC Nomination includes: Alternative B (5,388 acres)
Alternative C (5,388 acres)
Alternative D (2,596 acres)

Relevance (meets 3 of 6 criteria): Significant fish or wildlife resources
Significant scenic values
Natural system or process

Justification

- The USFWS has identified the area as potential habitat for two federally listed threatened and endangered species: bald eagle and peregrine falcon
 - BLM is mandated to protect and enhance habitat for special status species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
 - Area is currently monitored and surveyed to determine extent of use by these species and to determine if the area provides critical habitat for other special status species
 - Raptor wintering and nesting habitat
- Core wildlife habitat for a variety of wildlife species
 - Potentially occurring wildlife species (including elk, mule deer, wild turkey, black bear, javelina, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, and gray fox)
 - Lands serves as a wildlife corridor between BLM and Forest Service lands
 - Variety of raptors, songbird, reptiles, amphibians, and rodents
- Designated by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish as a "primitive," "quality," and "high demand" hunting unit due to unique setting and high quality wildlife habitat
- Habitat for dwindling mule deer population
 - Special management and protection needed to prevent further habitat fragmentation and degradation and to protect critical habitat and maintain viability of the mule deer population
- Considerable volunteer and BLM investment have been devoted to enhance wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities in the area
 - Activities include prescribed fire, piñon-juniper thinning, wildlife water facilities, spring restoration and enhancement, and grassland restoration
 - Area provides primitive recreation, significant scenic and geologic resources
- Includes acquired lands with wilderness characteristics
- The area is roadless, which protects the land from human disturbances
- Area should be protected from OHV, subdivision and energy exploration to protect habitat loss, fragmentation, and scenic and natural conditions

Importance – Meets 6 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance	National priority
Management concern	FLPMA mandate
Public concern	Is unique

Management Team Review/Suggestion

Threats: Moderate potential for oil and gas, moderate potential for carbon dioxide and helium, moderate geothermal potential, moderate potential for saleables.

Recommended for Nomination as proposed

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

V. Pelona Mountain

Reasons for Nomination: Recreation, Wildlife

ACEC Nomination includes: Alternative B (51,091 acres)
Alternative C (52,336 acres)
Alternative D (34,547 acres)

Relevance (meets 4 of 6 criteria): Significant cultural value
Significant scenic value
Significant fish or wildlife resource
Natural system or process

Justification

- The USFWS has identified the area as potential habitat for two federally listed threatened and endangered species: bald eagle and peregrine falcon
 - BLM is mandated to protect and enhance habitat for special status species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
 - Area is currently monitored and surveyed to determine extent of use by these species and to determine if the area provides critical habitat for other special status species
- Designated by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish as a "primitive," "quality," and "high demand" hunting unit due to unique setting and high quality wildlife habitat
- Habitat to one of New Mexico's largest elk herds
- Core wildlife habitat for a variety of wildlife species
 - Wildlife species (including elk, mule deer, wild turkey, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, and gray fox)
 - Variety of raptors, songbird, reptiles, amphibians, and rodents
- Habitat for dwindling mule deer population
 - Special management and protection needed to prevent further habitat fragmentation and degradation and to protect critical habitat and maintain viability of the mule deer population
- Serves as important wildlife corridor between BLM and Forest Service lands
- Considerable volunteer and BLM investment has been devoted to enhance wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities in the area
 - Activities include prescribed fire, piñon-juniper thinning, wildlife water facilities, spring restoration and enhancement, and grassland restoration
 - Portions of a National Scenic Trail (The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail) located within nominated area
- National significance
- Includes acquired lands with wilderness characteristics
- Provides primitive recreation
- Area is relatively roadless, which protects the land from human disturbance
- Area has significant scenic and geologic resources
- Area contains historic structures
 - Bat Cave on National Register of Historic Places

Importance – Meets 7 of 16 Criteria

More than local significance	Is unique	Management concern
Public concern	Is sensitive	
National priority	FLPMA concern	

Management Team Review/Suggestion

Questions: How large is potential raptor habitat area? Identify mule deer fragmentation threat area?

Threats: Moderate potential for oil and gas, moderate potential for carbon dioxide and helium, moderate geothermal potential, low/high potential for saleables

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

VI. Sawtooth

1. Is the nomination a new ACEC? Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes, specify the estimated acreage 125 acres.
2. Is the nomination an expansion of an existing ACEC? Yes ☐ No ☒
If yes, specify the size of the existing ACEC _____ acres and the number of acres proposed in the expansion _____.
3. Indicate the relevance of the nomination:

Significant historic value <input type="checkbox"/>	Significant fish or wildlife resource <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Significant cultural value <input type="checkbox"/>	Natural system or process <input type="checkbox"/>
Significant scenic value <input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard <input type="checkbox"/>

Provide a brief description of the specific relevance values (such as the specific endangered species and/or the habitat essential to maintain species diversity):

The area contains the plant species *Erigeron rhizomatus* (Zuni fleabane). This plant species has been listed Federally Threatened (USFWS 1988) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The area was nominated in the prior 1989 Socorro RMP as an ACEC and special management due to the sensitivity of the species. This mutual concern is shared by both the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department and the Nature Conservancy.

4. Indicate the importance of the described value, resource, system, process, or hazard:

More than local significance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is fragile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is irreplaceable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is rare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is exemplary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Concern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is unique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is threatened	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
National priority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
FLMPA Mandate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Management Concern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Threats:					
Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is vulnerable		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is endangered		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Provide a brief description of the importance of the resource(s) requiring special management attention.

The BLM is mandated by the Endangered Species Act to protect and enhance habitat for the federally listed species.

The species is known from 12 scattered populations (11 on U.S. Forest Service lands, 1 on BLM lands) in the Zuni, Datil, and Sawtooth Mountains of west-central New Mexico. *Erigeron rhizomatus* is threatened by modification of its habitat due to mineral exploration and development (USFWS 1988). The distribution of Zuni fleabane is geologically associated with the distribution of uranium deposits in west-central New Mexico. Any significant development of these deposits would seriously jeopardize the Zuni fleabane and probably prompt reclassification from threatened to endangered.

5. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

Planned actions and management prescriptions should be implemented to protect and enhance habitat to promote future delisting of the species.

A planned action in the prior Socorro RMP was to withdraw minerals from the ACEC, which has been done (see serial number NMNM 095118 mineral withdrawal).

Habitat for Zuni fleabane is found on steep north-facing slopes (up to 40 degrees) on the Baca formation clays, which are highly erodible. The vegetation community is piñon-juniper, which could make the population susceptible to wildfire. Other concerns may be intensive recreation or livestock use in the Zuni fleabane habitat.

6. Special management prescriptions are measures needed to protect the relevant values of an ACEC. At least one prescription is required for each nominated ACEC (BLM Manual 1613). Management prescriptions can vary across plan alternatives. Different management strategies set forth by the different prescriptions for the various alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS.

Please provide a description of management prescriptions or measures needed for the ACEC. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

Alternative B–Proposed Socorro RMP Revision

1. Limit motor vehicle use to designated routes.
2. Exclude the authorization of rights-of-way and leases.
3. Apply fluid mineral leasing stipulation S-NSO-T&E.
The above prescriptions are needed to protect the fragile soils and to prevent disturbance in Zuni fleabane habitat.
4. Acquire legal access.
This prescription would be for administrative purposes.
5. Exclude from vegetative material sales.
This prescription is needed to protect the fragile soils and to prevent disturbance in Zuni fleabane habitat.
6. May be placed in Fire Management Unit Category A, B, C, or D.
Fire suppression had been previously recommended for Zuni fleabane habitat. Considering the piñon-juniper community that this species is found in, it must have evolved with wildfire. Fire use may be considered depending on the condition class the habitat is in, and other existing conditions.
7. Develop an allotment management plan.

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

VII. Mockingbird Gap

1. Is the nomination a new ACEC? Yes ☒ No ☐
If yes, specify the estimated acreage 8,685
2. Is the nomination an expansion of an existing ACEC? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, specify the size of the existing ACEC _____ acres and the number of acres proposed in the expansion _____.
3. Indicate the relevance of the nomination:

Significant historic value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Significant fish or wildlife resource	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant cultural value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural system or process	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant scenic value	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provide a brief description of the specific relevance values (such as the specific endangered species and/or the habitat essential to maintain species diversity):

The Mockingbird Gap ACEC contains a rare complex of Paleoindian sites. Paleoindian sites represent the earliest uncontested cultural horizon in North America. Unlike later periods, this cultural expression was quite uniform throughout the continent, contributing to the national significance of the area. Very few sites of this time period are known, and it is imperative that these sites are preserved for research. In addition, while we are familiar with the sequence of cultural horizons, which archaeologists base on diagnostic tool types, and which in turn are based on prevailing technology, this area has yielded evidence of the transition from the technology and typology of the Clovis period to the Folsom period. This aspect of the Mockingbird Gap site is discussed in most archaeology textbooks dealing with the Paleoindian period in North America.

4. Indicate the importance of the described value, resource, system, process, or hazard:

More than local significance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is fragile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is irreplaceable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is rare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is exemplary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public Concern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is unique	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is threatened	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
National priority	<input type="checkbox"/>				
FLMPA Mandate	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Management Concern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Threats:					
Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is endangered	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is vulnerable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Provide a brief description of the importance of the resource(s) requiring special management attention. See paragraph above.

5. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

Because of their great antiquity, preservation issues related to the survival of different types of artifactual material from this time period, and due to depositional factors in the area, these sites are not always detected through routine surface inventory generally employed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Extra care must be taken to see that these sites are preserved for future research.
6. Special management prescriptions are measures needed to protect the relevant values of an ACEC. At least one prescription is required for each nominated ACEC (BLM Manual 1613). Management prescriptions can vary across plan alternatives. Different management strategies set forth by the different prescriptions for the various alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS.

Please provide a description of management prescriptions or measures needed for the ACEC. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

1. Controlled surface use

2. Increase standard cultural survey requirements to take into account potential impacts on subsurface sites which may lack surface manifestations. Requirements should be based on the nature of expected impacts from the proposed project, and may include monitoring for projects which include trenching. Proposed undertakings should be evaluated based on level of surface disturbance and the potential for the project to impact buried sites. Low impact projects such as fence replacements may not require more than standard section 106 compliance.
3. Limit motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails.
4. Restrict authorizations for rights-of-way and leases.

Concur: Kate Padilla, Socorro Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

VIII. Zuni Salt Lake Sanctuary Zone

Alternative B (46,746 acres)
Alternative C (156,601 acres)
Alternative D (2,107 acres)

Cultural resource staff proposes that the existing 4,839-acre Zuni Salt Lake SMA be managed as an ACEC under the action alternatives. It is felt that the formal Determination of Eligibility to the Nation Register of Historic Places for the larger Sanctuary Area provides considerable protection through requirements to consult with Tribes and State Historic Preservation Office in the course of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; however, it does not preclude mineral leasing and potential impacts associated with development. These requirements to consult apply to any Federal undertaking within the boundaries of the site and have the potential to affect cultural resources. Any foreseeable impacts could be addressed during the consultation process.

1. Is the nomination a new ACEC? Yes ☒ No ☐
2. Is the nomination an expansion of an existing ACEC? Yes ☐ No ☒
3. Indicate the **Relevance** of the nomination:

Significant historic value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Significant fish or wildlife resource	<input type="checkbox"/>
Significant cultural value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural system or process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Significant scenic value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provide a brief description of the specific relevance values (such as the specific endangered species and/or the habitat essential to maintain species diversity):

- Area is of great importance to the Zuni Tribe
 - Sacred site for the religious deity, the Salt Mother
 - Offerings are made on the site
 - A Salt gathering ceremony is performed by male Zuni youths at the site
- The Sanctuary Zone has historic value
 - Place where six Tribes have ceased hostilities to allow salt gathering for time immemorial
 - Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- Numerous cultural and burial sites are located throughout the area
- Cultural sites are of national significance
- High scenic value
- Unique volcanic caldera produces a distinct and irreplaceable brine lake ecosystem
- The lake is maintained through various groundwater contributions of water and soluble salts as well as surface runoff. The delicate hydrologic balance of the surrounding area must be preserved in order for the lake to continue and to continue the supply of salt for area Tribes.

4. Indicate the importance of the described value, resource, system, process, or hazard:

More than local significance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is fragile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is irreplaceable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is rare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is exemplary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public Concern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is unique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is threatened	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
National priority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
FLMPA Mandate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Management Concern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

Threats:	Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is vulnerable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is endangered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Provide a brief description of the importance of the resource(s) requiring special management attention.

The volcanic caldera is a unique geologic formation in the region, producing a distinct and irreplaceable brine lake ecosystem maintained by various groundwater contributions of water and soluble salts, as well as surface runoff. The delicate hydrologic balance of the surrounding area must be preserved for the lake to continue, and to continue the supply of salt to the Tribes. The site is on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's List of the Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places of 2003.

5. Please explain why the area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.

The current RMP now under revision contains a "SMA" intended to protect the Zuni Salt Lake. Actions associated with the proposed development of the Fence Lake Mine, some 12 miles away, have been shown to negatively impact the lake and cultural resources within the Sanctuary Zone. For this reason the special management attention currently afforded by the BLM RMP is insufficient for insuring protections and therefore increased special management measures are needed in the revised RMP.

6. Special management prescriptions are measures needed to protect the relevant values of an ACEC. At least one prescription is required for each nominated ACEC (BLM Manual 1613). Management prescriptions can vary across plan alternatives. Different management strategies set forth by the different prescriptions for the various alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS.

Please provide a description of management prescriptions or measures needed for the ACEC.

1. Limit motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails.
2. Restrict authorization of rights-of-way and leases.
3. Any proposed cumulative groundwater diversion over 3 acre-feet per year/per square mile within a 60-mile radius of the Zuni Salt Lake will require BLM review and approval according to a protocol agreed upon by the BLM and Pueblo of Zuni.
4. Any proposed actions (land, minerals, etc) within the ACEC will require consultation with the Governor of Pueblo of Zuni.
5. Restrict mineral material disposals.
6. Exclude the area from fluid leasing.
7. Restrict geophysical operations.

Why Special Management Attention:

The Sanctuary Zone has been identified as a natural area of great significance to six Native American Tribes and contains numerous archaeology sites, burial sites, trails, and other traditional cultural properties important to the heritage of those Tribes and essential for their cultural memory as well as current use. Without special measures these values would decline.

The Zuni Salt Lake is a unique and precarious ecosystem shared by Tribes and the reason for the existence of the Sanctuary Zone. Technical studies have revealed a vulnerability to the continued functioning of the lake ecosystem when sufficient water is withdrawn from aquifers connected to the lake or there is disturbance to the surface runoff.

Management Team Review/Suggestions

Threats: Actions associated with the proposed development of the Fence Lake Mine, some 12 miles away, may negatively impact the lake and cultural resources within the Sanctuary Zone. For this reason the special management attention currently afforded by the RMP is insufficient for insuring protections and therefore increased special management measures are needed in the revised RMP.

Concur: Don Ellsworth, Acting Field Manager

Do Not Concur: _____

DESCRIPTIONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS

I. Box Canyon SRMA

Acreage: Alternative B (1,107 acres)
Alternative C (1,501 acres)
Alternative D (300 acres)

Box Canyon SRMA is located 6 miles west of Socorro. The area can be reached within 15 minutes from Socorro.

Box Canyon is proposed for management as a SRMA to manage unique recreation opportunities and experiences for climbing and bouldering. The 1989 RMP designated the area as a SMA managed primarily for recreation uses.

A coordinated management plan was developed for the area in February 1999 and the management goal in that plan is as follows: "The Box will be managed to enhance recreational values, primarily rock climbing and bouldering, and to maintain the scenic quality. Special protection should be given to cultural sites as well as desert bighorn sheep and bats and their habitats. Any recreation facilities will be built and maintained to a standard that protects these and other resources, the public and fosters a pride of public ownership and partnership. Any development should blend with the landscape and not degrade scenic quality."

Vehicle use in the area will be designated as limited with all routes designated as open or closed. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

The existing Coordinated Activity Plan would be revised to incorporate decisions made in the RMPR. Revision of the Activity Plan would occur within five years of completion of the RMPR (contingent upon funding).

II. Datil Well SRMA

Acreage: 669 acres

The site is located 1 mile west of Datil and one hour from Socorro. The site can be accessed from either Highway 12 or Highway 60.

The area is proposed as a SRMA to manage for a variety of recreation experiences and opportunities. The 1989 RMP designated the area as an SMA.

A Recreation Area Management Plan was developed for the SMA in January 1992. Some of the opportunities associated with the site include day use, hiking on up to 3 miles of trails, group outings and the group shelter, camping, and wildlife observation. The Management Goal in the 1992 plan is that "The BLM will manage and maintain the Datil Well Campground recreation area to provide recreation opportunities, basic services including visitor safety and comfort, facility and grounds maintenance, coordination of employee and volunteer schedules and projects, and development and implementation of interpretation and environmental education programs."

Under proposed management, main access routes would be designated open for vehicle use. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

The existing management plan would be evaluated and revised as needed to incorporate management decisions from this RMPR upon its completion.

Revision of the Recreation Area Management Plan, if needed, would be done within five years upon completion of the RMPR (contingent upon available funding).

III. Socorro Nature Area SRMA

Acreage: 80 acres

The area is located east of Lemitar off of I-10 north of Socorro.

This area was not addressed in the 1989 RMP. The area was developed as a result of local interest and efforts in recent years. It is proposed for management as a SRMA.

Resources and activities available include primarily day use for picnicking and environmental education, hiking, sightseeing in Bosque Habitat, access to the Rio Grande, some camping, mountain biking, and interpretation.

A management plan has not been prepared. An interim plan is currently being developed. The primary objectives would be to provide for day use and environmental education and interpretation. A volunteer host is also proposed for the site to reduce vandalism and have an on-site presence to enhance user's experiences. Planned actions proposed in Appendix C will help improve these experiences and opportunities.

Vehicle use within the area would be designated as limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources. An interim activity plan is being developed. A management plan would be developed within five years upon completion of the RMPR (contingent on funding).

IV. Quebradas Backcountry Byway SRMA

Acreage: Approximately 3,130 acres, which includes the area within a quarter-mile buffer from centerline of the roadway.

The area is located east of Socorro and accessed from I-25 and US 380. The Byway can be reached within 15 minutes from Socorro.

The area is proposed for management as an SRMA to manage for a variety of recreation opportunities and experiences such as driving for pleasure, high scenic quality, geologic sightseeing, interpretation and environmental education, mountain biking, and access to hiking areas such as Presilla and Sierra de las Cañas WSAs.

The Backcountry Byway was designated in 1991 after completion of the 1989 RMP. It was established after receiving input from the local community, chamber of commerce, and various groups and individuals. A primary objective would be to manage for the values described above and emphasize the development of interpretation opportunities along the Byway through auto tour brochures, wayside exhibits, trailheads/parking area, and other tools to enhance visitor experiences and provide for health and safety.

The route (Byway) is a county road and would be open for all vehicle use. The Byway is shown on Map 3-11.

A travel management plan would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

V. Gordy's Hill SRMA

Acreage: Alternative B (7,647 acres)

Alternative C (3,087 acres)

Alternative D (7,174 acres)

The area is located about 7 miles northeast of Socorro and can be reached within 15 minutes. It was allocated as an "intensive use" Open Area for OHVs in the 1989 RMP and included about 1,200 acres. A larger area would be designated and managed as a SRMA for recreational activities, including OHV use, with use limited to designated routes.

This area has historically been used by the OHV community for over 30 years. Uses include motorcycles, 4-wheel-drive vehicles, and all-terrain vehicles. Additionally, this area is used annually for the Socorro Valley 100 motorcycle races and hill climbs. The general area is also scenic and provides opportunities for mountain biking as well.

The management objectives are to delineate routes and the types of use for those routes as well as to develop and implement management actions that would provide for health, safety, information, and enhance the user's experience. Signing and facility development would be a key part of meeting these objectives.

OHV use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

A map for public use showing routes open for use would be developed. An activity plan has not been developed for the area; however, there is a great need to develop a plan to manage the area. This area is the highest priority area to develop a management plan once the RMPR is completed. It should be completed within three years of the RMPR.

DESCRIPTIONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

I. Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Acreage: Alternative B (57,663 acres)
Alternative C (11,757 acres)
Alternative D (8,702 acres)

The trail corridor would be identified as a SMA. A portion of the trail passes through the Continental Divide WSA.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail was established as a part of the National Scenic Trail system by Public Law 95-625, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978. The trail runs the entire length of the Continental Divide within the United States from Mexico to Canada. As the trail winds through New Mexico, it crosses arid desert, rugged forested mountains, canyonlands, and lava flows. Two segments of the trail are located in Catron County, but only one is located primarily on public land. These segments are shown on Map 3-11. About 34 miles of trail has been developed within the Planning Area. Most of that is on Pelona Mountain within the Pelona Mountain SMA. The corridors were identified by user groups such as the Continental Divide Trail Alliance and the Continental Divide Trail Society. The corridors establish areas for a potential future trail location and emphasize management within the corridors, which would ultimately culminate in obtaining legal public access and an on-the-ground trail through areas which are primarily private (willing sellers, etc.), State, and BLM lands. Planned actions for the trail as well as retaining these areas would help in establishing a trail and maintaining experiences within the corridors.

The Congressional designation of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail automatically gives the trail national significance in all its segments. The two organized national interest groups, Continental Divide Trail Association and Continental Divide Trail Society, monitor planning, construction, management, and use of the trail.

The trail would be managed to meet the objectives of the enabling legislation, establish and maintain a trail route through the planning area that would meet up with trail routes to the south and the north, and provide a long distance trail hiking experience for the users.

The trail corridor would be limited to designated routes for motorized vehicles except for that portion inside the Continental Divide WSA, which would be closed to motorized vehicles. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

An activity plan would be prepared for the trail once a route has been established across non-Federal lands within the Planning Area, probably five to seven years from the completion of the Socorro RMPR. Any activity plan should be coordinated with neighboring BLM offices and agencies with Continental Divide Trail management responsibilities.

II. Fence Lake SMA

Acreage: Alternative D (25,453 acres)

Fence Lake was identified as a SMA in the 1989 RMP. Under Alternatives B and C, this area would be incorporated into the Zuni Salt Lake ACEC. The proposed SMA under Alternative D is the same area that is currently managed as the Fence Lake SMA.

Fence Lake SMA is located in the northwestern Catron County about 20 air miles northwest of Quemado, New Mexico. There are three major landforms: the nearly level mesa tops, steep sandstone and shale escarpments and hills, and gently sloping alluvial fans and drainages. The soils and topography are subject to headcutting,

soil piping, and sheet erosion resulting in numerous continuous and discontinuous gullies (BLM 1989). Resources found within the SMA include wildlife, range forestry, cultural, and minerals. A small portion of the SMA lies within the maximum coal potential area (BLM 1989). This SMA was designated to highlight the need to manage and protect a critical watershed through erosion control and minimization of surface-disturbing activities.

Management objectives for the area primarily deal with protecting and rehabilitating the watershed condition.

Motorized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

III. Fort Craig SMA

Acreage: 149 acres

Fort Craig would be identified as a SMA under all alternatives.

Fort Craig, now in ruins, was a U.S. territorial period military fort, critical in both the Indian Wars and the western theater of the Civil War. Founded in 1854, it was one of the first and largest forts established in the new U.S. Territory of New Mexico. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Craig is developed, with interpretive facilities, restrooms, and picnic tables.

Management goals are protection of cultural resource values, public interpretation, future scientific use, and recreational opportunities.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources. An activity plan for management of the area has been developed and would be revised or amended as needed in the future.

IV. Newton Site SMA

Acreage: 6,789 acres

Under the action alternatives, the Newton Site is expanded and identified as a Proprietary SMA. That is, location of the site would not be identified to the public in order to maximize protection of the area.

The Newton Site consists of a 150- to 200-room Chacoan greathouse pueblo and surrounding prehistoric community. The site was occupied from about A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1325 and represents an important locus for scientific investigation. The site has been heavily disturbed by vandals and uncontrolled student excavations prior to acquisition by the Federal Government, but retains good potential for scientific research.

Management goals are to preserve and protect significant cultural resource sites, provide opportunities for research, under Alternative D only, accommodate heritage tourism contingent on public/community demand and opportunities for appropriate mitigation of the effects of visitation.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

V. Penjeacu (formerly Teypama) SMA

Acreage: 11 acres

Penjeacu would be identified as a SMA under all alternatives.

Penjeacu Piro pueblo ruin is a late prehistoric and early historic habitation site of the Piro Indians, who occupied the central Rio Grande Valley at the time of Spanish contact. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and consists of over 200 rooms with kivas and a central plaza. It is located on a terrace of the west bank of the Rio Grande and overlooks the floodplain, where the agricultural economy of the occupants was no doubt based. The site has experienced severe damage from vandals, but retains great potential for scientific investigation.

Management goals for the Penjeacu SMA would be manage the area for protection of cultural resource values, public interpretation, and present and future scientific use.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated routes or eliminated, depending on the alternative selected. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

VI. Playas Pueblo SMA

Acreage: 203 acres

The Playas Pueblo would be identified as a proprietary SMA under all action alternatives.

This SMA consists of two major prehistoric pueblo ruins probably associated with the Tompiro prehistoric culture area. These sites are notable in addition to their size (200 plus rooms each) because of the fact that they are not located on water courses, but rather seem to have exploited wide, shallow internal drainages and, if early ceramic assessments are correct, were occupied over extraordinarily long time periods. Ceramic sequences for one of the sites suggest occupation from about A.D. 1150 through the A.D. 1700s. One of the ruins has been extensively vandalized, but retains good scientific potential, while the other remains virtually intact.

The management goal for the Playas Pueblo SMA is to preserve and protect the cultural resource sites of Playas Pueblo for current and future scientific use.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

VII. Puertecito SMA

Acreage: 7,153 acres

The Puertecito would continue to be identified and managed as a SMA under all alternatives.

The Puertecito SMA is located approximately 40 miles northwest of Socorro. The central portion of the SMA consists of deep alluvial flats, fans, and low hills. A series of low basalt dykes run north to northwest through the lowland area. Many of the watersheds within the SMA begin outside the boundary of the SMA. Generally, the watersheds are subject to severe sheet erosion and gully erosion during intensive rainstorms. Much of the erosion is due to reduced surface cover, intensive rainfall and runoff periods, and the fact that many of the soils in the SMA are highly erodable. This SMA was designated for the purposes of focusing watershed management and to improve soil stability. Parts of the SMA have had erosion control projects and tests completed in the past. In 1964, 2,200 acres were ripped and seeded. An experimental dike project consisting of contour dikes (13,800 feet) and wire checks (4,150 feet) was constructed in 1982.

The management goal for the area are to protect and rehabilitate the critical watershed area and minimize surface-disturbing activities.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

VIII. San Pedro Proprietary SMA

Acreage: 1,201 acres

The San Pedro area would be identified as a proprietary SMA under all action alternatives. That is, the location of the area would not be identified to the public in order to maximize protection of special status plant species.

The San Pedro Proprietary SMA contains populations of BLM special status species and New Mexico State sensitive species, *Amsonia fugatei* or Fugate's blue star. In the previous RMP for the Socorro Field Office, this area had been nominated by the Nature Conservancy and New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department for special management. Most of the known populations occur on public lands, with some smaller populations found on the Sevelleta National Wildlife Refuge and private lands. Habitat consists of limy conglomerate ridges and associated outwash slopes in Chihuahuan desert scrub at 5,000 to 5,900 feet in elevation. Vegetation within the area is composed of juniper, snakeweed, creosote bush, Apache-plume, black grama, galletta, fluffgrass, sand dropseed, and variety of other species.

Fugate's blue star is not palatable to the kinds of livestock presently occupying the area. Populations are small and localized, and individually may be severely impacted by human activity.

Management goals for the San Pedro Proprietary SMA would be to protect the area from surface-disturbing activities and to maintain the habitat in which the special status species is found.

IX. Soaptree SMA

Acreage: 1,296 acres

The Soaptree area would continue to be managed as a SMA.

The Soaptree SMA is located approximately 27 miles southeast of San Antonio, New Mexico. The area is managed as an SMA because of the aesthetic and recreational values it possesses. The area lies just north of the Jornada del Muerto WSA. Large dense yucca stands dominate the desert scenery. Although yucca stands occur in other parts of the Planning Area, they do not attain the size and density that they do in this area. With the increasing demand for yucca for landscape purposes, it is prudent to monitor and conserve areas for future use by the public.

Management goals for the Soaptree SMA would be to maintain the area for livestock grazing; protect the unique, natural and scenic yucca ecosystem; and to improve recreational opportunities.

Motorized vehicles will be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

X. Stallion SMA

Acreage: 10,883 acres

The Stallion area would continue to be managed as a SMA. The SMA also includes portions of the Presilla and Sierra de las Canas WSAs.

The Stallion SMA is located approximately 8 air miles east of Socorro, New Mexico. Vegetation in the SMA is typical of the upper Chihuahuan Desert at the northern extreme of its range. Major vegetation types include desert shrub, piñon-juniper, creosote bush, and grassland. Soils in the SMA vary from moderately deep to deep and loamy in swales and lowlands to coarse textured, gravelly, ranging from deep to shallow over bedrock. Much of the SMA is in a critical erosion class with the remaining area being moderate. Active and severe sheet and gully erosion is occurring over much of the SMA, particularly in the central and eastern parts. A number of

erosion control projects have been completed in the past on portions of the SMA, primarily entailing construction of wire check dams. Most of the work appears to have been completed by 1965.

Management goals for the SMA include protecting and rehabilitating the watershed condition by installing erosion control projects and controlling surface-disturbance activities.

Motorized vehicle use would be limited to designated routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources.

XI. Town of Riley SMA

Acreage: 533 acres

The Town of Riley would be designated as a SMA under Alternatives A and C only. The designation was dropped under Alternatives B and D to evaluate whether this area requires special management to address resource concerns.

Riley is something of a ghost town, but may be unique in that descendants of the original settlers of the town continue a cultural tradition known as "Followers of Santa Rita." They perform religious observances and maintain the graveyard at Santa Rita Church. A religious task structure is maintained even though the descendants are scattered over a wide region, and return annually for a mass and fiesta.

Management goals are to preserve and protect historic properties and to ensure that no adverse effects occur to the socio-cultural traditions of the "Followers of Santa Rita" as a result of BLM-authorized undertakings.

Vehicle use would be limited to existing routes. Travel management plans would be completed within five years of the completion of the RMPR, contingent upon the availability of funding and staffing resources. An activity plan prescribing management for the area would not be developed.

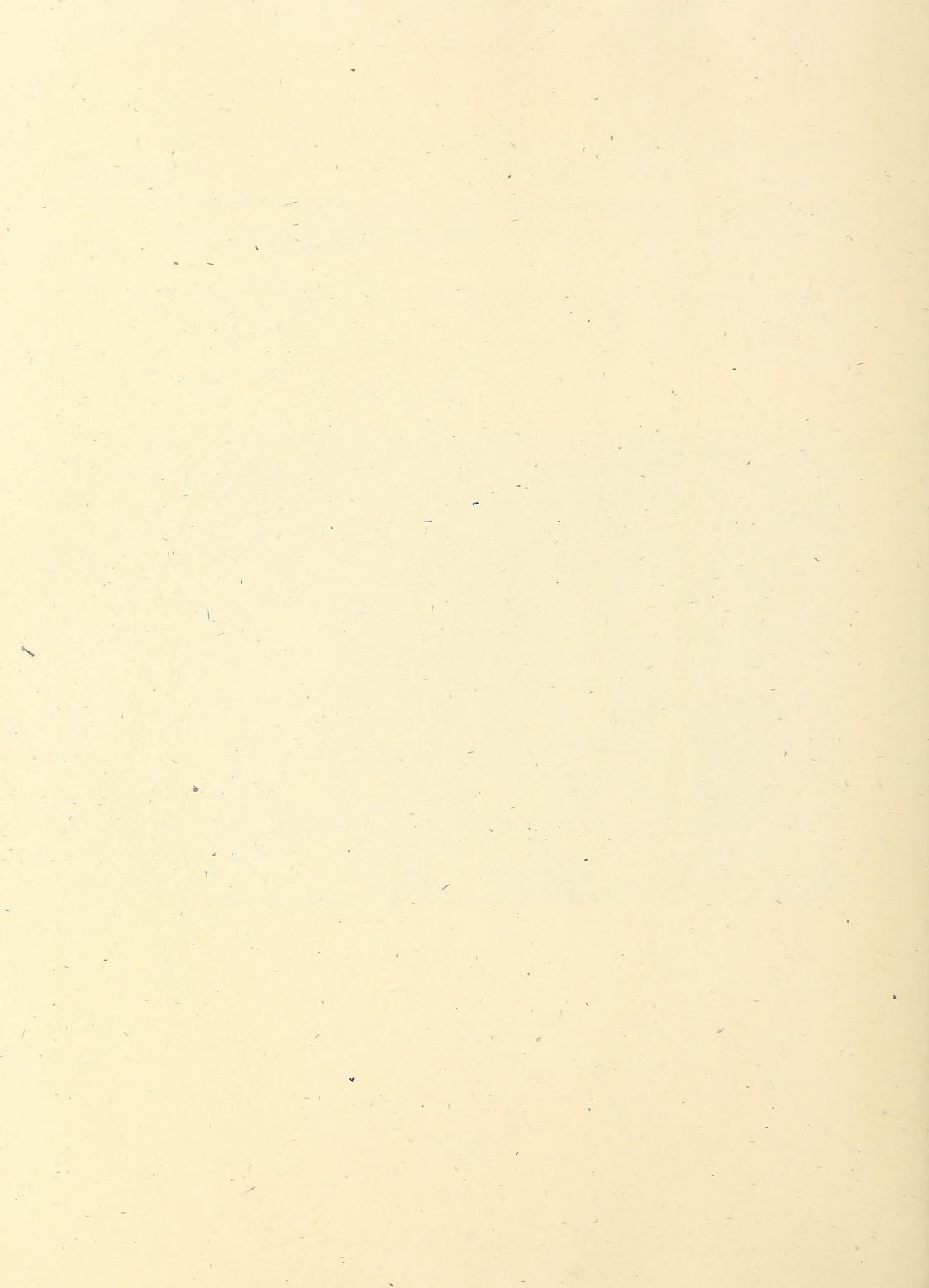
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Appendix L

Wildlife and Special Status Species





APPENDIX L

WILDLIFE AND SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

This appendix includes supplementary information on (1) best management practices (BMPs) and management parameters that would apply to the wildlife habitat management program, (2) aplomado falcon management guidelines, (3) additional information on federally listed special status species, (4) a table of Federal- and State-listed species in the Planning Area (Table L-1 on page L-12), and (5) a table of noxious weeds that may be found in the Planning Area (Table L-2 on page L-17).

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS AND GENERAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

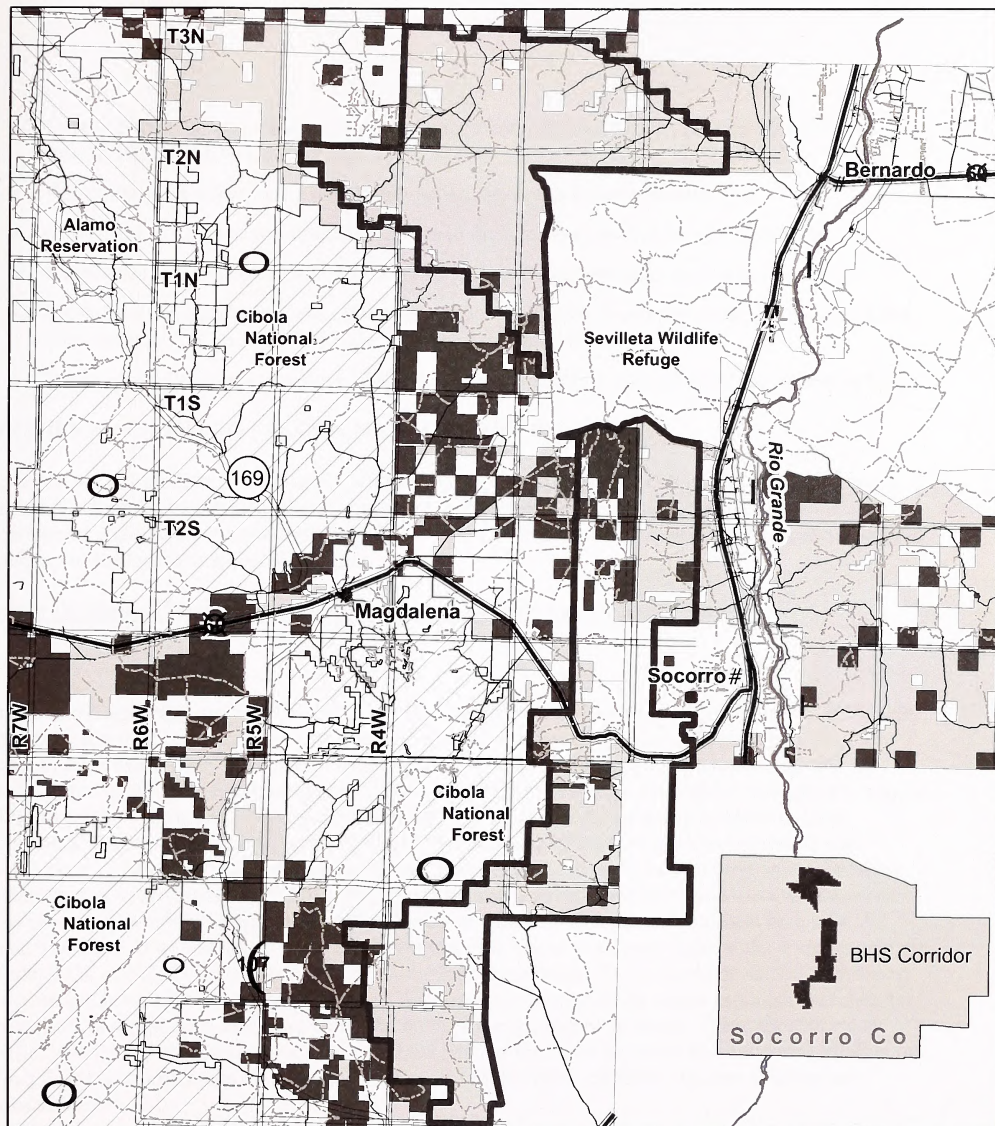
Habitat enhancement projects would be implemented at the landscape level. The following management parameters and associated BMPs would be utilized as needed to protect and enhance wildlife habitat:

- Upland habitats, including grasslands, shrub steppe, forest, and woodlands, will be managed so that the forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary for wildlife are available on public land. Vegetative communities will be managed for the desired plant community based on the ecological site. Management will be accomplished by enhancing, restoring, and maintaining wildlife habitat by reducing the amount of woody vegetation encroachment.
- Restore, maintain, or improve riparian vegetation, habitat diversity, and associated watershed function to achieve healthy and productive riparian areas and wetlands. Management will be accomplished by enhancing, restoring, and maintaining, riparian areas which have been degraded through the invasion of non-native vegetation, such as Tamarisk and Russian olive.
- Manage livestock forage production to support wildlife population levels identified by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF).
- In addition to continuing management guidance, develop and apply appropriate BMPs, fluid mineral stipulations, and/or mitigation measures, as determined through the environmental analysis process, for renewable energy development, fluid mineral development, and other surface-disturbing activities within the Socorro Field Office resource area for the protection of wildlife resources within areas of critical environmental concern, special management areas, and habitat management plan/cooperative resource management plan management areas, and other crucial habitat areas identified through inventory, survey, and study. Areas may include habitat for special status species, nesting areas, raptor nests; prairie dog towns; and desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk birthing areas.
- Apply seasonal use restrictions within crucial habitat areas or habitat for special status species, which may include high-use raptor areas, prairie dog towns, desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk birthing areas, and other crucial habitat areas identified through inventory, survey, and study.
- To protect desert bighorn sheep, domestic sheep, and goats will be excluded within occupied and historic habitat areas and the delineated desert bighorn sheep corridor/management area will be managed to enhance habitat conditions (Map L-1).
- Limit human and wildlife interactions within crucial habitat areas identified through inventory, survey, and study.

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) should take actions that further progress towards conditions indicating attainment of the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Such actions would include management that restores, protects, and enhances the resources necessary to support, as site potential allows, native wildlife species and their associated habitats in their historical proportions (BLM Manual Section 6840).

The following BMPs and/or management parameters would apply to the wildlife habitat management program in the Socorro Decision Area.

- Implement vegetative treatments to restore and enhance wildlife habitat. Treatments may include:
 - prescribed fire
 - mechanical treatment
 - hand crews with chain saws
 - heavy equipment (chaining, mowing, mulching, grubbing, etc.)
 - chemical treatments
- Maintain integrity and safety of existing habitat improvement projects.
 - perform annual or biannual inspection of all projects
 - maintain projects as needed
- Increase availability and distribution of year-round water.
 - develop springs/seeps where as necessary
 - construct artificial watering facilities where needed
- Modify fences or other man-made structures to limit impacts to wildlife.
- Construct/maintain watershed rehabilitation structures for purposes of reducing erosion.
- Continue to inventory, survey, and study wildlife populations for purposes of determining habitat needs and requirements or areas which require special protection and management.
- Limit adverse human/wildlife interactions.
 - limiting vehicle access into certain areas
 - road closures and obliterations (action alternatives include closure of approximately 26 miles to address wildlife concerns. Closure of other selected routes would occur as needed).
 - implement seasonal use restrictions into areas of resource concern
- Construct protective exclosures/fences around riparian areas, wildlife watering facilities, and other areas of resource concern.
- Monitor and inventory all habitat improvement projects to ensure that project objectives are being met.
 - global positioning system and incorporate into geographic information system
 - monitor use and effectiveness



Legend

- Federal
- State
- County
- Existing Access
- Corridor

Land Status

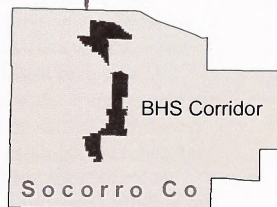
- BLM
- FS
- Indian
- Private
- State

0 1.5 3 6 Miles



BIG HORN SHEEP CORRIDOR

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- Implement/authorize predator damage management activities to meet species-specific management goals and objectives.
- Reintroduce, supplement, or translocate native species in suitable habitat.
- Implement environmental education events to meet management goals and objectives.
- Install/maintain signage where necessary to meet management goals and objectives.
- Implement updated Utah Field Office Guidelines for Raptor Protection From Human and Land Disturbance (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Utah Field Office).
- Implement wildlife management BMPs that relate to wildlife management (see Appendix C).

NORTHERN APLOMADO FALCON MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The following requirements would apply within the historic range of the northern aplomado falcon, in addition to a 15-mile buffer area around it in areas that are determined to be potential habitat. These requirements apply to all surface-disturbing activities. BMPs described for special status species would also apply to the northern aplomado falcon.

Surface Occupancy Requirements for Northern Aplomado Falcon Habitat

Unitization

Outside of the areas that are discretionarily closed to fluid mineral leasing, potential northern aplomado falcon habitat would be open to leasing, but fluid mineral leasing stipulation S-CSU-W4 requires new lessees to form exploratory units and to submit a plan of development prior to commencing drilling activity. This special protection measure will allow the BLM to manage the surface in an orderly way, as well as to control the rate of reservoir development. The BLM has the authority to approve Unit Agreements; require specific provisions of Unit Agreements; establish the rate of exploration and development; approve the tract allocation formula; and terminate units that cease production (or where production was never established). The objective is to protect grassland habitat and associated special status species of wildlife through improved planning of future oil and gas development on a unit. A simple definition of unitization is the operation of multiple leases as a single lease under a single operator. A Federal Oil and Gas Unit would result in less surface disturbance. Wells would be drilled in the most favorable locations without regard for spacing. The operator and the BLM would establish corridors for access roads and pipelines, and there would be no need for redundant facilities. There are also lease benefits in that individual leases could be extended beyond their primary term without actual production, as long as there is production on the unit. The Socorro Field Office currently has one existing unit (Cathead Mesa Unit).

Grazing Management Actions for the Protection of Aplomado Falcon Nests

This is not a nest site plan. A nest site plan is site specific. This is a list of potential actions that may be undertaken when an aplomado nest or nest selection activities may be disturbed by livestock grazing and related activities. Other actions may be developed and substituted as we gain understanding of aplomados and their management.

The objective is to avoid disturbance causing the loss of an aplomado falcon nest. Disturbance is defined here as activities of people or livestock that lead to the abandonment or loss of a potential (i.e., nest selection in progress) or existing aplomado falcon nest.

1. BLM will prepare an annual site plan, in cooperation with the grazing allottee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NMDGF, and other cooperators, for each aplomado nest or perhaps nest cluster, pasture, or allotment where nesting is discovered.
2. Depending on the level of or potential for nest disturbance and the specific grazing allotment situation the following measures may be applied with respect to accomplishing the stated objectives with the least disturbance to both the falcons and the grazing allottee.
 - a. Deactivate all livestock facilities (water troughs, supplement sites, etc.) within 2 miles of nest sites to divert cattle use to other areas of a pasture from March (or discovery of nest site) thru fledging (fledging may occur as early as May or as late as early August).
 - Or
 - b. Herd livestock away from the nest area. All herding activities must remain at least 0.25 mile from active nest sites.
 - Or
 - c. Remove grazing from the nest pasture(s) from March (or discovery of nest site) thru fledging (fledging may occur as early as May or as late as early August).
 - Or
 - d. Remove grazing from the allotment from March (or discovery of nest site) thru fledging (fledging may occur as early as May or as late as early August).
 - Or
 - e. With US FWS approval, construct a temporary enclosure or drift fence to protect nest. Maintain a distance between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from nest.
 - Or
 - f. With USFWS approval, BLM may place a small cattle barrier to protect the nest tree/yucca (examples: powder river or hog wire panels with t posts; steel L-shaped frames wired together and staked to the ground; a small solar electric fence). Use of these measures has a high likelihood of causing serious disturbance to the nest. Measures would be taken to minimize the impact (minimize time to set up, minimize visual impacts, time during the day to prevent egg cooling, time during female feeding forays, etc).
 - g. Enactment of livestock management measures should be accomplished within 1 week or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. Modify open water storages within 3 to 5 miles of occupied aplomado habitat. Ensure that there is some form of open water left available to birds and bats if large water sources are covered.
 - a. Cover open water storage units with small mesh netting.
 - b. Install floating neoprene covers on open water storages.
 - c. Replace open storages with closed ones.
4. Install and maintain bird escape ramps on all water troughs on public land.
5. Reduce human disturbance such as construction, working cattle, road, or range improvement maintenance within 0.25 to 0.50 mile of a nest.
6. Reduce threat of wildfire impacting nest structure.
 - a. Because allottees are quite often important links in fire suppression and are likely to request help from local volunteer fire departments. The Socorro Field Office fire

program should work closely with volunteer fire departments for quick, but appropriate, response to wildfire in nest areas.

1. Avoid fire operations, including aircraft use, as much as possible in the immediate nest area.
 - a. Keep ground operations at least 0.5 mile from nest site.
 - b. Keep air operations above 2,000 feet above ground level within 0.5 mile of nest sites.
- b. Use fire retardant to create fire breaks and protect nest structures (yuccas) during critical periods.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Tracking the Reasonable Foreseeable Development

The BLM will closely monitor acres disturbed to ensure the reasonable foreseeable development is an appropriate planning estimate. The number of acres projected to be disturbed directly from activities is 420 acres over the next 15 years. For helium and carbon dioxide resources, the approximate number of acres that are projected to be disturbed from exploration and development activities is 1,000 acres.

Preliminary Investigations

Activities occurring during preliminary investigations may include remote sensing; mapping of rock outcrops and seeps (either of which result in little or no surface disturbance); and seismic, gravity, and magnetic surveys.

A lease is not required to conduct such preliminary investigations. However, the geophysical operator is required to file a completed Form 3150-4, "Notice of Intent to Conduct Oil and Gas Exploration Operations" for all operations on public lands.

In general, the BLM requires an examination of resource values and development of appropriate surface protection and reclamation measures prior to the geophysical contractor beginning surface-disturbing activities associated with preliminary investigations. The BLM will solicit involvement from public land users (e.g., grazing allottees) to develop site-specific protection measures and reclamation specifications. Compliance monitoring should occur during and after seismic exploration activities when or if necessary. Compliance inspections during the operation ensure that requirements and guidelines are being followed. Compliance inspections upon completion of work ensure that the lines are clean and drill holes are plugged properly.

The frequency of authorized seismic exploration will be dependent upon resource conditions and seasonal restrictions (timing limitations) that may be imposed to reduce conflicts with watershed conditions, wildlife, and hunting. Management practices specific to wildlife and vegetation resources include the following:

- Prior to surveying/flagging routes for geophysical surveys or other preliminary activities, the project area shall be surveyed for raptor nests. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer. The Universal Transmercator grid locations of all raptor nests will be reported to the Authorized Officer. All raptor nests will be avoided by the required distances described under the surface disturbing activities section. A raptor nest is defined as any raptor or corvid nest.

- In areas that constitute occupied or potential northern aplomado falcon habitat, a protocol survey for this species will be conducted along with the general raptor nest survey described above, prior to surveying/flagging lines.
- During operations at any time, all habitat features (pinnacles, cliffs, ledges, caves, and trees, shrubs, and yuccas greater than six feet in height) containing or capable of containing a raptor nest will be avoided by vehicular traffic or other activities likely to destroy them.
- Time activities to avoid wet periods.
- In areas that allow for off-road travel, minimize the off-road impact of large vehicles. Use wide, flat-tread, balloon tires (especially on seismic thumper trucks) where possible. Use all-terrain vehicles rather than large vehicles where possible.
- Occupied habitat for special status species will be avoided in a manner similar to surface use requirements (avoid occupied habitat up to 0.5 mile) unless impacts are adequately mitigated.

Surface-Disturbing Activities

In siting facilities, the following measures must be followed:

- Prior to surveying/flagging locations for pads, routes for roads, and any other preliminary activity, the project area will be surveyed for raptor nests. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer. All raptor nests will be avoided by the distances and seasonal periods listed below.

Distance:

- Eagle – 0.5 mile (February 1-July 15)
- Prairie Falcon – 0.5 mile (March 1-August 1)
- Ferruginous Hawk – 0.5 mile (February 1-July 15)
- Aplomado Falcon – 0.5 mile (January 1-July 31)
- Gunnison Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile (February 15-June 15)
- Black Tailed Prairie Dog – 0.25 mile (January 1-June 15)
- All other raptor species – 0.25 mile, during observed nest establishment through fledgling

Long duration land use activities will not be allowed to occur within the species-specific spatial buffer zone of active nests or occupied prairie dog towns listed above. Short duration activities will be avoided within the species-specific spatial buffer zones during the dates listed above. Short duration activities will be limited to the spatial buffer zone outside of the boundary of the occupied prairie dog town and will not occur within the occupied town. All other raptor species nests will be avoided by the spatial buffer zone only during the period listed above, regardless of the duration of the activity. Before land use activities can commence a raptor and prairie dog survey must be completed.

A short duration activity is defined as an activity that would begin outside of a given breeding season and end prior to initiation of a given breeding season. A long duration activity is defined as an activity which would continue into or beyond a given nesting/breeding season. An active nest is defined as any nest that has been occupied in the last seven years. A nest will be determined active or inactive by the Authorized Officer. Surveys will be conducted by professional biologists approved by the Authorized Officer.

- In areas that constitute occupied or potential northern aplomado falcon habitat, a protocol survey for this species will be conducted along with the above general raptor nest survey prior to surveying/flagging locations.

- During operations at any time, all habitat features (pinnacles, cliffs, ledges, caves, and trees, shrubs, and yuccas greater than six feet in height) containing or capable of containing a raptor nest will be avoided by vehicular traffic or other activities likely to destroy them.
- In areas that allow for off-road travel, minimize the off-road impact of large vehicles. Use wide, flat-tread, balloon tires (especially on seismic thumper trucks) where possible. Use all-terrain vehicles rather than large vehicles where possible.
- Tree and vegetation clearing will be limited to the minimum area required.
- Construction activities will be timed to avoid wet periods.
- Power lines will be constructed to standards outlined in the most recent version of "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines" published by the Edison Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation, unless otherwise agreed to by the Authorized Officer. The holder is responsible for demonstrating that power pole designs not meeting these standards are raptor safe. Such proof will be provided by a raptor expert approved by the Authorized Officer. The BLM reserves the right to require modifications or additions to power line structures constructed under this authorization, should they be necessary to ensure the safety of large perching birds. The modifications and/or additions will be made by the holder without liability or expense to the United States.
- Occupied habitat for special status species will be avoided in a manner similar to surface use requirements (avoid occupied habitat up to 0.5 mile) unless impacts adequately mitigated.
- All equipment installed on Federal leases will be constructed to prevent birds and bats from entering them and, to the extent practical, to discourage perching and nesting.
- Open top tanks, reserve pits, disposal pits, or other open pits will be required to be equipped to deter entry by birds, bats, or other wildlife.
- In areas that allow for off-road travel, minimize the off-road impact of large vehicles. Use wide, flat-tread, balloon tires (especially on seismic thumper trucks) where possible. Use all-terrain vehicles rather than large vehicles where possible.
- Time activities to avoid wet periods.

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Table L-1 includes Federal- and State-listed species in the Planning Area. Federally listed special status species are discussed below.

Zuni fleabane (*Erigeron rhizomatus*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Nearly barren detrital clay hillsides with soils derived from shales of the Chinle or Baca formations (often seleniferous); most often on north- or east-facing slopes in open piñon-juniper woodlands at 7,300 to 8,000 feet.

Chiricahua leopard frog (*Rana chiricahuensis*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State Species of Concern

Habitat: Occurs in cienegas (wetland communities surrounded by arid lands), pools, livestock tanks, lakes, reservoirs, streams, and rivers from 3,200 to 8,900 feet in central and southwestern New Mexico.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State listed as Threatened

Habitat: Occurs in New Mexico mainly as a migrant and winter resident. Primarily occurs in riparian areas adjacent to major rivers, reservoirs, and ponds. Roosts in large trees that may be close to foraging areas. Other potential foraging habitats include grass flats, rolling uplands, and creosote rolling uplands.

Least tern (*Sterna antillarum*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Least tern nest on the ground, typically on sites that are sandy and relatively free of vegetation. Such areas include sandbars in river floodplains. In New Mexico and other parts of the southern Great Plains, alkali flats also are potential nesting areas.

Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State Species of Concern

Habitat: Habitat characteristics highly sought by Mexican spotted owls include coniferous forests with high canopy closure, high stand density, a multi-layered canopy, uneven-aged stands, numerous snags, and high amounts of downed woody matter.

Northern aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Habitat consists of grassy plains interspersed with mesquite, cactus, and yucca.

Piping plover (*Charadrius mebdus*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Piping plover occur on sandflats or along bare shorelines of rivers and lakes.

Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Breeding sites are associated closely with dense groves of willows, tamarisk, Russian olive, and other riparian woodland vegetation; often associated with a scattered overstory of cottonwood.

Gila chub (*Gila intermedia*)

Status: Federally Proposed Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Gila River basin.

Gila trout (*Oncorhynchus gilae*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Threatened

Habitat: Gila trout inhabits small, cool, clear mountain streams with riparian vegetation that provides a fairly complete canopy.

Loach Minnow (*Tiaroga cobitis*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State listed as Threatened

Habitat: The loach minnow inhabits riffle areas with moderate-to-rapid water velocities and moderate-to-high gradients.

Rio Grande Silvery Minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Rio Grande silvery minnow occupy a variety of habitats in low-gradient, large streams with shifting sand or silty bottoms.

Spikedace (*Meda fulgidae*)

Status: Federally listed as Threatened, State listed as Threatened

Habitat: The preferred habitat of spikedace varies with season and age class. Young fish typically occupy stream-margin habitats, where the water velocity is low and the depth is less than 3 inches. Adults are most commonly found in main channel areas, where water velocity is higher and with depths of 3 to 8 inches. In winter months, the species tends to congregate along cobble-bottomed stream margins where such habitats are available.

Alamosa (springsnail) tryonia (*Tryonia alamosae*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Threatened

Habitat: Alamosa spring snail is an aquatic species that occurs in low-velocity water near thermal spring sources.

Socorro isopod (*Thermosphaeroma thermophilus*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: This species exists in extremely limited habitat – thermal spring waters with temperatures ranging from 25 to 33 degrees celcius.

Socorro (springsnail) pyrg (*Pyrgulopsis neomexicana*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: The Socorro pyrg is an aquatic, gilled invertebrate found in springs and brooks, living among aquatic plants, on stones, or in the uppermost layer of an organic muck substratum.

Black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State Species of Concern

Habitat: Black-footed ferret occur in mixed shrub habitats. They are associated closely with prairie dog colonies, whose burrows provide retreats for ferrets. The dependency of the black-footed ferret on this prey species is such that reduction in the number of ferrets is directly related to reduction in prairie dog densities.

Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*)

Status: Federally listed as Endangered, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: Wolves were once found in shortgrass plains, sacaton grassland, sycamore, cottonwood, rabbitbrush, chapparal, and oak savanna.

Pecos sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*)

Status: Federally threatened, State listed as Endangered

Habitat: A wetland species that grows on wet, alkaline soils at spring seeps, wet meadows, stream courses, and pond margins.

**TABLE L-1
FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES IN PLANNING AREA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	BLM	County
PLANTS					
Abajo penstemon	<i>Penstemon lentus</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Arizona sunflower	<i>Helianthus arizonensis</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Cory's joint-fir	<i>Ephedra coryi</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Socorro
Davidson's cliff carrot	<i>Pteryxia davidsonii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Fugate's amsonia	<i>Amsonia fugatei</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Gila groundsel	<i>Packera quaerens</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron

**TABLE L-1
FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES IN PLANNING AREA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	BLM	County
Gila thistle	<i>Cirsium gilense</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Gooding's bladderpod	<i>Lesquerella goodingii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Heartleaf groundsel	<i>Packera cardamine</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Hess' fleabane	<i>Erigeron hesssii</i>	Sensitive	E	Sensitive	Catron
Laguna fame flower	<i>Talinum brachypodium</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Socorro
La Jolla prairie clover	<i>Dalea scariosa</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Mogollon clover	<i>Trifolium longipes ssp. neurophyllum</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Mogollon death camas	<i>Anticlea mogollonensis</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Mogollon dock	<i>Rumex tomentellus</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Mogollon hawkweed	<i>Hieracium fendleri</i> var. <i>mogollense</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Mogollon whitlow grass	<i>Draba mogollonica</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Mohave panicum	<i>Panicum mohavense</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Mount Graham beardtongue	<i>Penstemon deaveri</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
New Mexico beardtongue	<i>Penstemon neomexicanus</i>		D		Catron
Nutriosio milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus nutriosensis</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Organ Mountains giant hyssop	<i>Agastache pringlei</i> var. <i>verticillata</i>	Sensitive	Rare		Catron
Organ Mountains paintbrush	<i>Castilleja organorum</i>		Rare	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Parish's alkali grass	<i>Puccinellia parishii</i>	Sensitive	E	Sensitive	Catron
Pecos sunflower	<i>Helianthus paradoxus</i>	T	E	Sensitive	Socorro
Plank's campion	<i>Silene plankii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Porter's globe mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea procera</i>		Rare	Sensitive	Socorro
Rock fleabane	<i>Erigeron scopulinus</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Sacramento groundsel	<i>Senecio sacramentanus</i>		Rare		Catron
San Andres rock daisy	<i>Perityle staurophylla</i> var. <i>homoflora</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Socorro
San Mateo penstemon	<i>Penstemon pseudoparvus</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Socorro
Sand pricklypear	<i>Opuntia arenaria</i>	Sensitive	E	Sensitive	Socorro
Southwest Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum cobrense</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Standley's whitlow grass	<i>Draba standleyi</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Tall bitterweed	<i>Hymenoxys brachyactis</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Socorro
Wooton's alumroot	<i>Henckera wootonii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Wooton's hawthorn	<i>Crataegus wootoniana</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive		Catron
Wright's campion	<i>Silene wrightii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Wright's globe mallow	<i>Sphaeralcea wrightii</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Wright's marsh thistle	<i>Cirsium wrightii</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Zuni fleabane	<i>Erigeron rhizomatus</i>	T	E	Sensitive	Catron
Zuni milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus missouriensis</i> var. <i>accumbens</i>	Sensitive	Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron
WILDLIFE					
Amphibians					
Arizona toad	<i>Bufo microscaphus microscaphus</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro

**TABLE L-1
FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES IN PLANNING AREA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	BLM	County
Chiricahua leopard frog	<i>Rana chiricahuensis</i>	C	Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Lowland leopard frog	<i>Rana yavapaiensis</i>			Sensitive	Catron
Birds					
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>		T		Catron, Socorro
Northern aplomado falcon	<i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i>	E	E		Socorro
Baird's sparrow	<i>Ammodramus bairdii</i>		T	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Bald eagle	<i>Haleaetus leucocephalus</i>	T	T		Catron, Socorro
Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>		T		Catron, Socorro
Black tern	<i>Chlidonias niger surinamensis</i>			Sensitive	Socorro
Brown pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis carolinensis</i>		E		Catron
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cucularia hyugaea</i>			Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Common black hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus anthracinus</i>		T		Catron, Socorro
Common ground dove	<i>Columbina passerina pallescens</i>		E		Socorro
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>			Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Gila woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>		T		Catron
Gray vireo	<i>Vireo vicinior</i>		T		Catron, Socorro
Interior least tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	E	E		Catron, Socorro
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>			Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Mexican spotted owl	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	T	Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Mountain plover	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Neotropic cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>		T		Socorro
Northern goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Piping plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	T	E		Socorro
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	E	E		Catron, Socorro
Varied bunting	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>		T		Catron
Violet-crowned hummingbird	<i>Amazilia violiceps ellioti</i>		T		Socorro
White-faced ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>			Sensitive	Socorro
Whooping crane	<i>Grus americana</i>		E		Socorro
Yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	C			Catron, Socorro
Fish					
Chihuahua catfish	<i>Ictalurus sp.</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Desert sucker	<i>Catostomus clarki</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron
Flathead chub	<i>Platygobio gracilis</i>			Sensitive	Socorro
Gila chub	<i>Gila intermedia</i>		E	Sensitive	Catron
Gila trout	<i>Onchorhynchus gilae</i>	E	T		Catron
Loach minnow	<i>Tiaroga cobitis</i>	T	T		Catron
Longfin dace	<i>Agosia chrysogaster</i>			Sensitive	Catron
Rio Grande chub	<i>Gila pandora</i>		Sensitive		Socorro

**TABLE L-1
FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES IN PLANNING AREA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	BLM	County
Rio Grande shiner	<i>Notropis jemezianus</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Rio Grande silvery minnow	<i>Hybognathus amarus</i>	E	E		Socorro
Roundtail chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>		E	Sensitive	Catron
Sonora sucker	<i>Catostomus insignis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron
Speckled dace	<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>			Sensitive	Catron
Spikedace	<i>Meda fulgida</i>	T	T		Catron
Mammals					
Arizona montane vole	<i>Microtus montanus arizonensis</i>		E		Catron
Allen's big-eared bat	<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Black-footed ferret	<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	E	Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Cave myotis	<i>Myotis velifer</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Common hog-nosed skunk	<i>Conepatus leuconotus</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Desert bighorn sheep	<i>Ovis canadensis mexicana</i>		E		Socorro
Eastern red bat	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Big free-tailed bat	<i>Nyctinomops macrotis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Fringed myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes thysanodes</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Gunnison's prairie dog	<i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Desert pocket gopher	<i>Geomys bursarius arenarius</i>		Sensitive		
Hooded skunk	<i>Mephitis macroura milleri</i>		Sensitive		Catron
New Mexico jumping mouse	<i>Zapus hudsonius luteus</i>		T	Sensitive	Socorro
Little brown bat	<i>Myotis lucifigus occultus</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Long-eared myotis	<i>Myotis evotis evotis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Long-legged myotis	<i>Myotis volans interior</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Mexican gray wolf	<i>Canis lupus baileyi</i>	E	E		Catron
Organ Mountains Colorado chipmunk	<i>Tamias quadrivattatus australis</i>		T	Sensitive	Socorro
Oscura Mountain's Colorado chipmunk	<i>Tamias quadrivattatus oscuraensis</i>		T	Sensitive	Socorro
Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Plecotus townsendii pallascens</i>			Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Pecos River muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus ripensis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Socorro
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Ringtail	<i>Bassariscus astutus</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
Small-footed myotis	<i>Myotis ciliolabrum melanorhinus</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Spotted bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>		T	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Western red bat	<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Western spotted skunk	<i>Spilogale gracilis</i>		Sensitive		Catron, Socorro
White-nosed coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>		Sensitive		Catron
Yuma myotis	<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>		Sensitive	Sensitive	Catron, Socorro
Reptiles					
Narrowhead garter snake	<i>Thamnophis rufipunctatus rufipunctatus</i>		T	Sensitive	Catron

**TABLE L-1
FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES IN PLANNING AREA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status	BLM	County
Texas horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma cornutum</i>			Sensitive	Socorro
Big Bend slider	<i>Trachemys gaigeae</i>		Sensitive		Socorro
Invertebrates					
Alamosa springsnail	<i>Tryonia alamosae</i>	E	T		Socorro
Chupadera springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis chupaderae</i>	C	E		Socorro
Gila springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis gila</i>	C	T		Catron
NM hot springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis thermalis</i>	C	T		Catron
Ovate vertigo snail	<i>Vertigo ovata</i>		T		Socorro
	<i>Thermosphaeroma thermophilus</i>	E	E		Socorro
Socorro isopod					
Socorro mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix neomexicana</i>		Sensitive		Socorro
Socorro springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis neomexicana</i>	E	E		Socorro

SOURCE: Federal and State listed species: New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 2005 (BISON-M database);

NOTES: C = Candidate D = Delisted E = Endangered T = Threatened

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Table L-2 includes noxious weeds that may occur in the Planning Area. This list is specific to Socorro County; to date, only salt cedar and Russian olive have been found on BLM land within Catron County.

**TABLE L-2
NOXIOUS WEEDS POTENTIALLY OCCURRING IN PLANNING AREA**

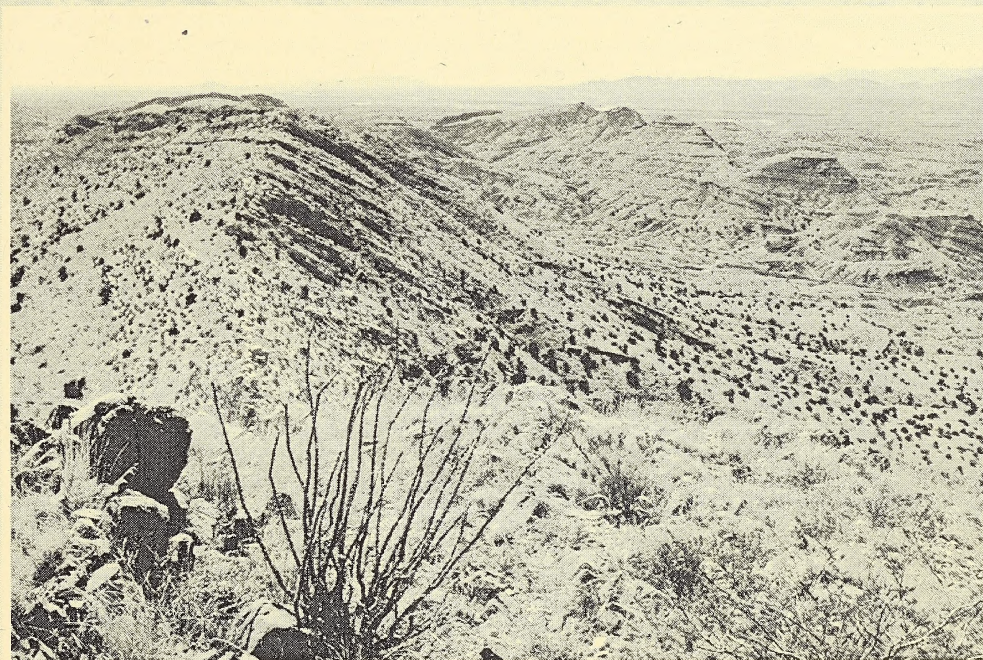
Class "A" Weeds: Non-native species with a limited distribution in the County. High priority preventing new infestations and eliminating existing infestations.	
African Rue*	<i>Peganum harmala</i>
Alfombrilla	<i>Drymaria arenarioides</i>
Black henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>
Bull thistle*	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Camelthorn*	<i>Alhagi pseudalhagi</i>
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum L.</i>
Dalmation toadflax	<i>Linaria genisitifolia ssp dalmatica</i>
Diffuse knapweed	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>
Dyer's woad	<i>Isatis tinctoria</i>
Eurasian watermilfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>
Giant salvinia	<i>Salvinia molesta</i>
Halogeton	<i>Halogeton glomeratus</i>
Hoary cress*	<i>Cardaria draba</i>
Hydrilla	<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>
Jointed goatgrass	<i>Aegilops cylindrical</i>
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>
Malta starthistle*	<i>Centaurea melitensis</i>
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>
Onionweed	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>
Poison hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum L.</i>
Purple loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Purple starthistle	<i>Centaurea calcitrapa</i>
Scotch thistle	<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>

Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>
Yellow starthistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>
Yellow toadflax*	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
Class "B": Weeds: Non-native species that are presently limited to portions of the County. Designated for control in areas where they are not yet widespread.	
Parrot feather*	<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>
Perennial pepperweed*	<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>
Russian knapweed*	<i>Acroptilon repens</i>
Siberian Elm*	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>
Tree of Heaven*	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Class "C" Weeds: Non-native species widespread in the County and State. Long-term programs are necessary to manage these species.	
Field bindweed*	<i>Convolvulus arvensis L.</i>
Russian olive*	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia L.</i>
Salt cedar*	<i>Tamarix sp.</i>

* Indicates infestations currently found and mapped in Socorro County.

Appendix M

Old Growth Forest Definitions



APPENDIX M

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Existing guidance provided in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Manual 8270-1 “General Procedural Guidance for Paleontological Resource Management” and BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook were used to provide management common to all alternatives within the Planning Area. To protect vertebrate localities and noteworthy invertebrate or plant localities, BLM has developed a geographic information system (GIS) tool to classify the Planning Area based on a probability to discover important fossils in a particular area. Management prescriptions for specific sensitivity level areas provide procedures for BLM specialists and proponents of actions to follow while conducting site-specific analysis for future proposals within the Decision Area.

Under all proposed action alternatives, the Socorro Field Office lands would manage paleontological resources based on the GIS database maps, other ongoing inventories and databases of fossil resources in New Mexico, and in some instances, on a case-by-case basis. Protection of such resources, where appropriate, would be accomplished to facilitate suitable scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils; foster public awareness and appreciation for the area’s paleontological heritage; and manage paleontological values to protect and preserve specimens that are present in the Decision Area.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS BY CLASS

Paleontological resource management classes are shown on Map M-1.

- Class 1: No concern related to paleontological resources unless other site specific surveys note fossil resources in the project area.
- Class 2: No concern related to paleontological resources unless other site-specific surveys note fossil resources in the project area.
- Class 3: Concern related to paleontological resources must be evaluated on a case-by-case project basis. Existing data available through the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and BLM offices will be used to identify possible resources in the area. GIS tools would be used to screen for appropriate actions. Assessments and additional mitigation could be done on a case-by-case basis.
- Class 4: Concern related to paleontological resources is high and active management prescribed. Proposed ground-disturbing activities require assessment to determine whether significant paleontological resources occur in the area of a proposed action. Notification of requirements will be made to proponents prior to commitment of the resources (for example: leasing, land disposals, surface mines, pipelines, large scale construction projects). Use existing data, GIS screening tools, and site-specific inventories in the assessment. Based on the specific assessment, develop additional management actions, including mitigation for identified paleontological resources.
- Class 5: Concern related to Class 5 lands is towards identification and protection of paleontological resources. Identify Class 5 lands through existing and ongoing inventories, known localities, and ongoing refinement of the paleontological GIS layer for the Planning Area.

Currently there are no mapped Class 5 fossils; however, there may be local occurrences of Class 4 or 5 fossils determined from database searches of existing and ongoing inventories, and on a case-by-case basis.

PRESENCE OF RESOURCES

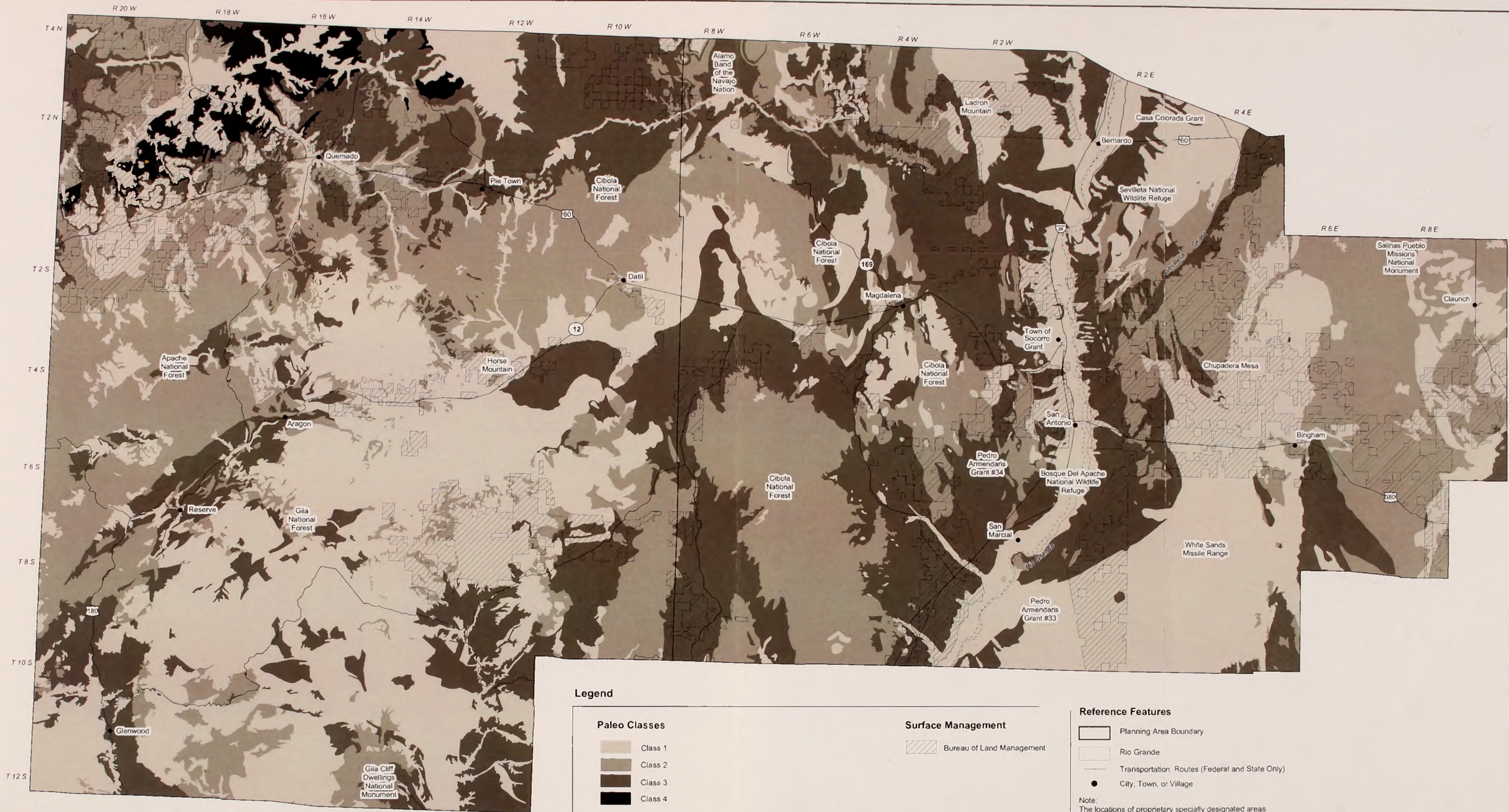
Rock units representing more than 1.5 billion years of geologic time are present in the Socorro Field Office. Many of these units contain paleontological resources and specifically important vertebrate, noteworthy invertebrate, and plant fossils. The potential for a given geologic unit to contain paleontological resources varies by geologic time and the environment represented by specific rock units. As the potential for paleontological resources increases, the need for mitigating surface-disturbing activities also increases.

The BLM has classified geologic formations in the Socorro Field Office according to the Probable Fossil Yield Classification. The planning tool provides for the development of sensitivity levels based on specific geologic units, usually at the formation level and are classified according to the probability of yielding paleontological resources. Probable Fossil Yield Classification is based on probabilities, not certainties or special circumstances. There will be exceptions to each criterion used as the basis for classification and should be handled as unique situations. Mitigation for these situations are handled on a case-by-case basis, as needed. Mitigation requirements may include: (1) additional database searches for site specific paleontological resources, (2) site specific on-the-ground surveys prior to surface disturbance or construction activities, (3) trained field monitors present during construction or ground disturbing activities, (4) recovery, evaluation and curation of the fossil, or (5) avoidance of the site because of the extent and significance of the fossil discovery. The classifications with descriptions follow.

Class	Description	Basis	Comments
1	Igneous and metamorphic (tuffs are excluded from this category) geologic units or units representing heavily disturbed preservational environments that are not likely to contain recognizable fossil remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fossils of any kind are not known to occur except in the rarest of circumstances Igneous or metamorphic origin Landslide deposits 	The land manager's concern for paleontological resources on Class 1 acres is negligible. Ground-disturbing activities would not require mitigation except in rare circumstances.
2	Sedimentary geologic units that are not likely to contain vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant non-vertebrate fossils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertebrate fossils known to occur very rarely or not at all Age greater than Devonian Age younger than 10,000 years Deep marine origin Aeolian origin Diagenetic alteration 	The land manager's concern for paleontological resources on Class 2 acres is low. Ground-disturbing activities are not likely to require mitigation.
3	Fossiliferous sedimentary geologic units where fossil content varies in significance, abundance, and predictable occurrence. Also sedimentary units of unknown fossil potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units with sporadic known occurrences of vertebrate fossils Vertebrate fossils and significant nonvertebrate fossil known to occur inconsistently; predictability known to be low Poorly studied/or poorly documented 	The land manager's concern for paleontological resources on Class 3 acres may extend across the entire range of management. Ground-disturbing activities need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for the need to mitigate.

Class	Description	Basis	Comments
4	Geologic units that are highly fossiliferous and have produced significant vertebrate fossils and/or significant invertebrates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant soil/vegetation cover; outcrop not likely to be impacted • Other characteristics that lower the vulnerability of both known and unidentified fossil sites 	The land manager's concern for paleontological resources on Class 4 acres is toward management and away from unregulated access. Proposed ground-disturbing activities would require assessment to determine whether significant paleontological resources occur in the area of a proposed action and whether the action will impact the paleontological resources. Mitigation beyond initial findings would range from no further mitigation necessary to full and continuous monitoring of significant localities during the action.
5	Highly fossiliferous geologic units that regularly and predictably produce vertebrate fossils and/or scientifically significant nonvertebrate fossils and that are at risk of natural degradation and/or human-caused impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertebrate fossils and/or scientifically significant nonvertebrate fossils are known and documented to occur consistently, predictably, and/or abundantly • Unit is exposed: little or no soil/vegetative cover • Outcrop areas are extensive, outcrop erodes readily, may form badlands • Easy access to extensive outcrop in remote areas • Other characteristics that increase the sensitivity of both known and unidentified fossil sites 	The land manager's highest concern for paleontological resources should focus on Class 5 acres. Mitigation of ground-disturbing activities is required and may be intense. Areas of special interest and concern should be designated and intensely managed.

SOURCE: Originally developed by the Paleontology Center of Excellence and the Region 2 (U.S. Forest Service) Paleo Initiative, 1996. Some modification by Dale Hansen, Regional Paleontologist, Wyoming, 2002 and Patricia M. Hester, Regional Paleontologist, New Mexico, 2004.



Paleontological Resource Management Classes

Socorro Field Office RMPR/EIS

October 2006

Universal Transverse Mercator
Zone 13, Units Meters
GRS 1980 Spheroid
NAD83 Datum

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Kilometers

P:\BLM\Socorro_RMPR_EIS\GIS\plots\Draft\RMPREIS\Map_M-1_Paleo_classes.pdf



Location in
New Mexico

Legend

Paleo Classes

- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4

Surface Management

- Bureau of Land Management

Reference Features

- Planning Area Boundary
- Rio Grande
- Transportation Routes (Federal and State Only)
- City, Town, or Village

Note:
The locations of proprietary specially designated areas
have not been mapped to ensure protection of sensitive resources.

Source:
Base Map Information: BLM, Socorro Field Office 2003
Jurisdiction Information: BLM, Socorro Field Office 2003

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the
accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for
individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes
not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map
Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map M-1

Appendix N

Paleontological Resources Management



APPENDIX N

OLD GROWTH FOREST DEFINITIONS

OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) National Science and Technology Center staff was asked to develop an information base of old-growth forest descriptions that could contribute to the use of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) authorities, and which might be used in BLM land use plans. Section 102(c)(2) of the HFRA provides that covered projects using HFRA authority are to “fully maintain, or contribute toward the restoration of, the structure and composition of old-growth stands according to the pre-fire suppression of old-growth conditions characteristic of the forest type, taking into account the contribution of the stand to landscape fire adaptation and watershed health, and retaining the large trees contributing to old-growth structure.” The Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act Interim Field Guide address the old-growth and large tree retention requirements on pages 25 through 29.

The library staff at the National Science and Technology Center conducted an exhaustive literature search for old-growth descriptions. Although scientific literature citations related to old-growth forests are numerous, few publications or published articles contain more than generic definitions of old growth. A review of the definitions suggests that old-growth forest is typically distinguished by the following:

- Large size trees of specific species
- Wide variation in age classes and stocking levels
- Accumulations of large-size dead standing and fallen trees
- Decadence in the form of broken or deformed tops and boles
- Multiple canopy layers
- Canopy interspaces and under story patchiness

In the early 1990s, each region of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) developed descriptions of old growth for Society of American Foresters (SAF) forest cover types found in the region. The Forest Service’s national standard for the descriptions contains five structural attributes for consideration in developing minimum criteria for old-growth determination: live trees in the main canopy, variation in tree diameters, dead trees, tree decadence, and number of tree canopies. Descriptions did not have to include all five attributes. The descriptions could include additional region-specific attributes if they were considered important in determining old-growth stands.

Copies of the Forest Service’s descriptions were obtained by the BLM library. They were reviewed for applicability to BLM-managed forests and to the HFRA requirement for “pre-fire suppression old-growth conditions.” A list of forest cover types for BLM-managed lands was obtained from the Forest Service’s Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) database with assistance from FIA staff at the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest Research Stations. The FIA and SAF cover types do not correlate one-to-one in all cases; FIA lists more cover types for the western United States than does the SAF. However, in most cases the relationship between the SAF and FIA cover types was fairly straightforward.

Table N-1 (at the end of Appendix N) shows old-growth descriptions available by the Forest Service Region and SAF Forest Cover Type. It identifies their applicability to the BLM by listing the states or portions of a state encompassed within Forest Service regional boundaries. The “Meets HFRA Requirement” column identifies which descriptions likely meet the needs of the BLM with respect to the HFRA requirement for a pre-fire suppression condition.

Most forest types on BLM-managed lands are included in the Forest Service's old-growth descriptions. One should not take the information in the table at total face value; some generalizations had to be made. The Forest Service Region 1 descriptions are not for cover types defined by the SAF; they are region-specific cover types. Those descriptions were correlated to the most similar SAF cover type for use in the table.

Some forest cover types occur on BLM-managed lands that are not present, or are of minor occurrence, on National Forests. Consequently, old-growth descriptions for the several piñon, juniper, and oak cover types found on BLM-managed lands are not in the Forest Service's descriptions. The FIA also includes a mesquite cover type in Arizona; an old-growth description for mesquite is not available. A description for old-growth western juniper, as noted in the references, was found in a separate published work from Forest Service Region 6 (Waichler et al. 2001)

Although old-growth descriptions for most BLM cover types are included in the Forest Service work, there are some limitations with the descriptions themselves. Most of the descriptions do not explicitly describe "pre-settlement" old-growth conditions as per the HFRA requirement. Some descriptions do meet the requirement in that they address conditions (such as stocking, age, etc.) as would be found in a pre-settlement old-growth forest. For example, the Region 3 southwestern ponderosa pine description discusses the role of fire in old-growth development. Therefore, one can conclude that the description fits conditions before the influence of settlement and fire suppression.

Each description was judged on its ability to meet the HFRA requirement for a pre-settlement or pre-fire suppression condition. In the case of dry forest types, to be HFRA applicable, a description had to include a discussion of the effects of fire and the fire return interval in creating old-growth stands. At higher elevations with more wet forest types, fire is generally a stand-replacing event which reverts the stand to an earlier seral stage or even causes a forest type conversion. All descriptions for high elevation forest types are believed to meet HFRA requirements.

When in doubt about the role of fire, or where the description is vague about the influence of fire suppression, descriptions are believed to not meet HFRA requirements. The Region 5 and Region 6 descriptions clearly identify conditions existing today that they consider old-growth. Their old-growth descriptions identify "average" characteristics of ecologically old stands, or stands beyond maturity in a timber management context. The descriptions include the effects of modern human influences on the forest. They do not describe a pre-settlement condition.

Because of missing descriptions or descriptions not meeting the HFRA requirement, additional descriptions may need to be developed for some BLM cover types. Also, this section does not intend to imply that the references descriptions should be used as written. They may require changing to meet BLM situations.

Much of this information cited in this section was developed before the advent of easily transferable documents and consequently is only partially available electronically. In some Forest Service Regions the information is posted on a website. In other instances, the information is available only in hard copy from Regional Offices. Copies of all documents are available from the BLM library but may have to be sent as a hard copy.

ATTRIBUTES AND CLASSIFICATION

Old growth definition structural attributes were developed for the five primary forest cover types in the Southwest (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southwestern Region 1992). The attributes shown in Table N-2 (at the end of Appendix N) for each of the forest cover types are to be used to inventory and identify candidate stands for old-growth forest classification. The structural attributes will help identify stands that meet the minimum threshold characteristics to be considered as old-growth forest, excluding any consideration of stand size or location.

OLD GROWTH DEFINITIONS

Piñon-juniper Forest Cover Type

The piñon-juniper (239) woodland forest cover typed occupies approximately 6.6 million acres.

The piñon and juniper species that are in the Southwest are Rocky Mountain piñon, Arizona piñon (single-leaf piñon), border piñon, alligator juniper, redberry juniper, Rocky Mountain juniper, one-seed juniper, Utah juniper, and Pinchot juniper. Piñon-juniper woodlands commonly integrate to such vegetation as chaparral (shrub-dominated communities), grasslands, shrubsteppes (codominant mixtures of grasses and shrubs), evergreen oak woodlands (or encinal), and ponderosa pine or other forest types. There are 70 piñon-juniper associations that can be described in the Southwest (Moir and Carleton 1987).

The specific species or species mix found at any particular site is largely due to climatic, geographic, and elevation differences. Piñon and juniper trees are found on a wide range of soil conditions.

Description

Old-growth piñon-juniper will be late successional in development with large, old trees older than 150 years, on low sites, and 200 years, on high sites. There may be a few standing and down dead trees, but dead branches/limbs and even parts of the stems of older piñon and juniper trees may help make up the dead material deficit. The piñon-juniper stands usually develop under all-aged conditions (early and mid successional stages) until the site becomes fully occupied with older trees (late successional stage).

As indicated by the large number of associations, old-growth piñon-juniper is variable in composition. The typical woodland piñon-juniper old-growth would be fairly open with the presence of an understory of grass, forbs, and often shrubs. Since existing piñon-juniper stands are developing with reduced herbaceous understory competition and without low-intensity ground fires, as occurred prior to the late 1800s, they typically have a larger number of stems and a denser canopy structure. The less shade tolerant herbaceous understory vegetation is reduced significantly when an overstory reaches around 30 percent.

Age Longevity

Swetnam and Brown (1992) recently reported that the mean age for piñon pine was 278 years, as represented from 43 sites and 719 old trees in Arizona and New Mexico. The oldest living piñon tree, at the time of sampling, was 666 years (Swetnam and Brown 1992).

Ponderosa Pine Forest Cover Type

The ponderosa pine (237) forest cover type in the Southwestern Region covers approximately 3.9 million acres outside of the wilderness areas and an undetermined amount within the reserved areas.

The dominant tree species in the ponderosa pine forest cover type is ponderosa pine. Minor tree species of piñon pine and juniper occur with ponderosa pine at lower elevations adjacent to the piñon-juniper forest cover type, although, Rocky Mountain and alligator juniper can occur any place within the ponderosa pine type. At higher elevations near the mixed-species group, Southwestern white pine and Gambel oak can be found in abundance, and frequently small amounts of Douglas-fir, white fir, and aspen are present.

Ponderosa pine has been referred to as blackjack and yellow pine in the past. The term blackjack indicated a younger ponderosa pine with dark gray to black bark color. The blackjack's bark is deeply furrowed with narrow ridges between the fissures. In contrast, the term yellow pine was used to indicate an older tree. The older yellow pine's bark is reddish brown to yellow, carrying the color well into the top of the tree; the plates are usually very wide, long, and smooth. The bark color transition begins sometime between 120 to 150 years of age, depending upon the geographic location. The older trees also have large

branches in the upper portion of the tree that tend to be perpendicular to the stem. In addition, the tree top is flatter than younger more vigorous trees.

Fire was key in shaping Southwestern ponderosa pine forests prior to pre-European settlement. Low-intensity ground fires typically burned through ponderosa pine forests at 3- to 15-year intervals, keeping forests open in appearance, and removing competing understory vegetation and down material. Frequent burning resulted in irregularly-shaped large patches with even-aged groups of trees varying in size, age, and density over the landscape.

Fire suppression, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, mining, and recreational uses have altered the pre-settlement conditions. Now the ponderosa pine forests are generally denser, with many small trees, have fewer large trees, have a greater accumulation of down material, and have sparse herbaceous understory.

Description

Old-growth ponderosa pine will be late successional in development with large trees older than 180 years of age; mature tree characteristics will be as described for yellow pine. The size and number of large trees will represent the productivity of the site, with fewer and smaller trees on the lower sites. Minimums are at least one large dead standing tree and two large-sized dead down trees per acre. More snags and down logs will not distract from the late successional old-growth characteristics. The structure may be either single-storied or multi-storied. Density will also vary with site productivity; with less basal area and canopy cover on the less productive land.

Age Longevity

Pearson (1950) states the oldest ponderosa pine recorded in the Southwest was 650 years. Trees over 400 years are found occasionally, but mature trees in general are not much over 300 years old and most are less than 200 years old (Pearson 1950).

White (1985) found that trees in the Gus Pearson Natural Area ranged in age up to 405 years, but the majority of the trees were less than 200 years; peak ages were between 145 and 165 years. Covington's and Moore's (1991) data appear to show a rapid decline in the number of large ponderosa pine trees at about 200 years of age when a dense understory exists. Daniel (1980) states that ponderosa pine remains physiologically young up to 200 years of age in its response to thinning.

Swetnam and Brown (1992) recently reported that the mean age for ponderosa pine was 279 years. Their data set represented 62 sites and 915 old trees in Arizona and New Mexico. The oldest living ponderosa pine tree, at the time of survey, was 742 years (Swetnam and Brown 1992).

Aspen Forest Cover Type

The aspen forest cover type (217) seldom, if ever, occurs as a pure stand of quaking aspen or as the climax species in the Southwest; it always appears in association with one or more other tree species as the seral species. Species that are associated with it are ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, limber pine, subalpine fir, white fir, and Southwestern white pine.

Aspen is one of the first species that regenerates after a wildfire or similar disturbance, if the clone is present. Aspen will quickly sucker from an existing live root system following a disturbance that kills the upper portion of the aspen tree (aspen does not normally regenerate from seed in the Southwest). Rapid growth occurs after suckering and during the early stand development years. With increasing stand age, conifer seedlings, from surrounding conifer seed trees, eventually become established and grow in the shade of the aspen, aspen acting like a nurse crop to the conifers. Since aspen is relatively short lived and conifers longer lived, the conifers eventually outgrow aspen, replacing the aspen, first as a mixed type and finally as a conifer type.

Description

Aspen old-growth would be characterized as having a single canopy overstory layer of old aspen trees at least 100 years of age. There would be an understory of conifers; however, there could be instances where the understory conifers would be removed by cutting to keep an open appearance for a specific value. There would probably be few dead standing and down trees until the old aspen trees begin to degenerate from pathogenic causes, then down dead material would begin to accumulate. As the overstory aspen trees continue to die, the understory conifers would begin to dominate the stand as an early or mid successional stage, depending upon their size and development, and the old-growth stand will no longer exist. Aspen old-growth, at the best, is short term in duration.

Age Longevity

Aspen is a small- to medium-sized, fast-growing and short-lived tree. Aspen is susceptible to a large number of diseases and is host to a wide variety of insects. The insects, many of them defoliators, tend to reduce the tree's vigor, but are not the major cause of tree death. Diseases are the primary cause for the short life of aspen. A few vigorous trees attain a maximum age of about 200 years; the oldest recorded is 226. The pathological age of aspen in the West ranges from 80 to 120 years (Hunter 1989; Perala 1990).

No habitat type list was developed for aspen. Aspen does not occur as a habitat type in the Southwest. Aspen can occur as a forest cover type in any plant association where aspen is present; however, aspen would be considered a seral species (as early successional species).

Mixed-species Group Forest Cover Types

There is several forest cover types included in the mixed-species group. The mixed-species group includes the Douglas-fir (210), white fir (211), blue spruce (216), and limber pine (219) forest cover types. Most often the mixed-species stands have a rich diversity of vegetation, including three or four different tree species, sometimes more (Krauch 1956).

The major tree species found in this group are Douglas-fir and white fir. Often included in minor amounts are tree species such as subalpine fir, corkbark fir, Engelmann spruce, blue spruce, Southwestern white pine, ponderosa pine, aspen, and Gambel oak.

The mixed-species group is a productive forest component. This group occurs on the landscape at a middle elevation between the lower elevation ponderosa pine forest cover type and the higher elevation Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir forest cover type. The mean annual precipitation in the Douglas-fir zone averages a little more than 26 inches and the growing season is of adequate length for good growth response (Krauch 1956).

The various tree species all have different shade tolerance levels, regeneration requirements, and growth characteristics. Therefore, for trees, the tolerance of most practical importance is their ability to establish and grow satisfactorily in the shade of, and in competition with, other larger trees. Shade tolerant tree species express their presence and increase in number as a mixed-species stand grows older (mid and late succession stages) and/or becomes denser. There is a gradual change in species composition to the more shade tolerant species without natural or man-caused disturbance.

The tolerance of the associated species has been given as subalpine fir \geq Englemann spruce \geq corkbark fir \geq white fir \geq Douglas-fir \geq blue spruce $>$ Southwestern white pine \geq limber pine $>$ ponderosa pine $>$ aspen \geq Gambel oak (Daniel 1980). Limber pine and Gambel oak were added to Daniel's reference as observed in the Southwest.

Before European settlement of the Southwest, low-intensity ground fires in mixed-species forests occurred at lesser intervals than in ponderosa pine. Ground fires burned more frequent on dry, low

elevation sites and less frequent on moist, high elevation sites. The fires keep the forest open, allowing less shade tolerant tree species such as ponderosa pine, aspen, and Gambel oak to establish and grow.

Since fire suppression management was started in the early 1900s, mixed-species forest structure and composition has changed. The structural change has been to increased crown cover and basal area densities, more trees, especially smaller trees, forming a multi-storied condition. The compositional change has been to the more shade tolerant species such as white fir and Douglas-fir. Furthermore, the lack of fire and change in conditions have increased the susceptibility of the forest to insect and disease agents.

Description

Old-growth mixed species group forest cover types will be late successional in development with large trees older than 150 years. The size and number of large trees will represent the productivity of the site, with fewer and smaller trees on the lower sites. The forest should have a diverse composition of tree species; aspen may not be present in this stage. At least 3.5 large, dead-standing trees and four large, dead down pieces per acre of any species will be present. The forest structure can be either single storied or multi-storied. Basal area and canopy cover densities will vary depending upon the productive capability of the land.

Age Longevity

Douglas-fir – Coastal Douglas-fir is considered very long lived. Ages in excess of 500 years are not uncommon and some have exceeded 1,000 years; however, interior Douglas-fir rarely lives more than 400 years (Hermann and Lavender 1990). Hunter (1989) lists the maximum longevity age for Douglas-fir to be 1,000 years and the pathological longevity age of 150 years. Lynch (1990) reported sampling 13 live Douglas-fir trees on the Carson National Forest that were greater than 600 years of age; five of the trees were 700 to 779 years old.

Swetnam and Brown (1992) recently reported the mean age for Douglas-fir to be 278 years, as represented on 38 sites—526 old trees in Arizona and New Mexico. The oldest living Douglas-fir tree, at the time of the sampling, was 930 years.

White Fir – Coastal white fir does not often exceed 350 years, but 500-year-old trees have been reported; however, the maximum age in the interior may be close to 300 years (Markstrom and McElderry 1984). Hunter (1989) lists the maximum longevity age for white fir to be 360 years and the pathological longevity age of 150 years. The oldest known living white fir tree in Arizona and New Mexico, at the time of sampling, was 333 years (Swetnam and Brown 1992).

Subalpine Fir – The subalpine fir/corkbark fir trees often live for more than 250 years (Markstrom and McElderry 1984). Hunter (1989) lists the maximum longevity age for subalpine fir to be 250 years and the pathological longevity age of 130 years. Alexander (1987) recognized that the species suffers severely from heart rot; many trees either die or are complete culls at an early age.

Engelmann Spruce – Engelmann spruce matures at about 300 years, often dominant spruce are 250 to 450 years old, and trees 500 to 600 years are not uncommon (Alexander and Sheppard 1990).

Blue Spruce – Blue spruce is apparently a long-lived tree, often reaching up to 600 years or more in age (Fechner 1990).

Southwestern White Pine – Southwestern white pine has very little information concerning longevity; however, it is observed that Southwestern white pine could have the same longevity attributes as Eastern white pine. The maximum longevity is 450 years and the pathological longevity age is 160 to 170 years for Eastern white pine (Hunter 1989). The age of decline for Western white pine is 300 to 400 years and

the oldest age 500 years (Graham 1990). The oldest known living Southwestern white pine tree in Arizona and New Mexico, at the time of the sampling, was 538 years (Swetnam and Brown 1992).

Limber Pine – Preston (1961) indicates that limber pine reaches maturity in 200 to 300 years. One tree in southern California was found to be well over 1,000 years; another in central Idaho was 1,650 years old (Steele 1990). Lynch (1990) reported finding limber pine trees on the Carson National Forest that were hollow; the outer stem measured 1,500 to 1,700 years old. Lynch is confident that trees measuring 2,000 years old are located in this area. The oldest known living limber pine found in Arizona and New Mexico reported by Swetnam and Brown (1992), at the time of sampling, was 1,670 years.

Gambel Oak – Gambel Oak is considered a short-lived tree. A study in the Navajo National Monument, Arizona, indicated that oak stems rarely live longer than 80 years; 103 was the oldest stem found. In addition, 90 percent or more of the stems encountered in long-established clones were less than 10 years old (Brotherson et al. 1983). The oldest known living Gambel oak tree in Arizona and New Mexico, at the time of sampling, was 401 years (Swetnam and Brown 1992).

Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir Forest Cover Type

The dominant tree species in the spruce-fir (206) forest cover type are Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Minor tree species of Douglas-fir, blue spruce, white fir, limber pine, aspen, and occasionally ponderosa pine associate at the lower elevations, and corkbark fir and bristlecone pine at the higher elevations. The bristlecone pine (209) forest cover type is included with the spruce-fir description.

Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir occur as codominants or in nearly pure stands of one or the other species. Engelmann spruce generally extends above subalpine fir and corkbark fir, forming nearly pure stands at timberline.

Spruce-fir forests have lower fire frequencies than the ponderosa pine and mixed-species. The frequencies are from 63 to 400 years and are usually stand replacement events.

Description

Old-growth spruce-fir will be late successional in development with large trees older than 140 years where Engelmann spruce is less than 50 percent composition and 170 years old where Engelmann spruce is 50 or more percent composition of the stand. The size and number of large trees will vary with site productivity, with fewer and smaller trees on the lower sites. There is usually over-abundance of standing dead and down trees. The structure will more than likely be two or more storied with natural regeneration appearing in gaps or small openings caused by the death of one or more of the large trees. Density will usually be high; but will be slightly less on the less productive sites.

Bristlecone pine is much less tolerant to shade than Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir and therefore would almost always be the pioneer species for spruce-fir stands. However, occasionally old-growth bristlecone pine may occur in small-sized patches on very harsh, exposed sites. Where it does occur, it would have small tree-sized characteristics.

Age Longevity

The pathological and maximum longevity ages for all species in the spruce-fir have been discussed in the mixed-species forest cover type except for bristlecone pine. The bristlecone pine grows very slow, reaches maturity in 200 to 250 years, obtaining ages of over 2,000 years, possibly the oldest living organism (Preston 1961).

Swetnam and Brown (1992) recently reported that the oldest known living bristlecone pine and Engelmann spruce trees in Arizona and New Mexico, at the time of sampling, was 1,438 and 295 years, respectively.

**TABLE N-1
OLD-GROWTH DESCRIPTIONS**

References	States	SAF Cover Types found on BLM with Old-growth Descriptions Available	Meets HFRA Requirement	SAF Cover Types Found on BLM without Old-Growth Descriptions
Forest Service Region 1				
Green et al. 1992	Northern Idaho, Montana, North Dakota	205 Mountain hemlock 206 Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir 208 Whitebark pine 210 Interior douglas fir 212 Western larch 213 Grand fir 215 Western white pine 218 Lodgepole pine 219 Limber pine 224 Western hemlock 228 Western red cedar 237 Interior ponderosa pine	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	217 Aspen* 220 Rocky Mountain juniper
Forest Service Region 2				
Mehl 1992	Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota	206 Engelmann spruce-Subalpine Fir 210 Interior douglas fir 217 Aspen 218 Lodgepole pine 237 Interior ponderosa pine (Front Range) 237 Interior ponderosa pine (Black Hills) 237 Interior ponderosa pine (Southwest) 239 Piñon-juniper	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	208 Whitebark pine* 219 Limber pine* 220 Rocky Mountain juniper
Forest Service Region 3				
USDA Forest Service, Southwestern Region 1992	Arizona, New Mexico	206 Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir 217 Aspen 237 Interior ponderosa pine 239 Piñon-juniper 210 Interior douglas fir 211 White fir 216 Blue spruce 219 Limber pine	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	220 Rocky Mountain juniper
Forest Service Region 4				
Hamilton 1993	Southern Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Western Wyoming	206 Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir 208 Whitebark pine 209 Bristlecone pine 210 Interior douglas fir 216 Blue spruce 217 Aspen 218 Lodgepole pine 219 Limber pine 237 Interior ponderosa pine (Northern Plateau Race) 237 Interior ponderosa pine (Rocky Mountain Race) 239 Piñon-juniper	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	220 Rocky Mountain juniper 223 Jeffery pine* 235 Cottonwood-willow

**TABLE N-1
OLD-GROWTH DESCRIPTIONS**

References	States	SAF Cover Types found on BLM with Old-growth Descriptions Available	Meets HFRA Requirement	SAF Cover Types Found on BLM without Old-Growth Descriptions
Forest Service Region 5				
USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region 1992	California	207 Red Fir	Yes	239 Piñon-juniper
		211 White Fir	No	233 Oregon white oak
		218 Lodgepole pine	Yes	238 Western juniper
		229 Pacific douglas fir	No	246 California black oak
		232 Coast redwood	No	249 Canyon live Oak
		234 Douglas fir/tanoak/madrone	No	
		237 Interior ponderosa pine	No	
		243 Mixed conifer	No	
		245 Pacific ponderosa pine	No	
		247 Jeffery pine	No	
256 California mixed subalpine forests	No			
Forest Service Region 6				
USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region 1993	Oregon, Washington	206 Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir	Yes	207 Red Fir
		210 Interior douglas-fir	Yes	238 Western juniper, (see Waichler et al. 2001)
		211 White fir	No	
		213 Grand fir	No	
		218 Lodgepole pine	Yes	
		224 Western hemlock	Yes	
		226 Coastal true fir-hemlock	No	
		229 Pacific douglas-fir	Yes	
		231 Port-orford-cedar	No	
		232 Redwood	No	
234 Douglas fir-tanoak-pacific madrone	No			
237 Interior ponderosa pine	Yes			
Forest Service Region 10				
Capp et al. 1992	Alaska	201 White spruce	Yes	
		204 Black spruce	Yes	
		205 Mountain hemlock	Yes	
		217 Aspen	Yes	
		223 Sitka spruce	Yes	
		224 Western hemlock	Yes	

*A definition is available from one of the other regions.

TABLE N-2
OLD-GROWTH ATTRIBUTES BY FOREST COVER TYPE

	Piñon-Juniper		Interior Ponderosa Pine		Aspen	Mixed Species Group		Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir	
Forest Cover Type, SAF Code	239		237		217	210, 211, 216, 219		206, 209	
Site Capability Potential Break Between Low and High Site			55 Minor			50 Douglas-Fir Edminster and Jump		50 Engelmann Spruce Alexander	
Live trees in main canopy	Low	High	Low	High	All	Low	High	Low	High
Trees/acre	12	30	20	20	20	12	16	20	30
DBH/DRC	9"	12"	14v	18"	14"	18"	20"	10"	14"
Age (Years)	150	200	180	180	100	150	150	140 ³ /170 ⁴	
Variations in tree diameters (y/n)	No		No		No	No		No	
Dead trees standing	Low	High	Low	High	All	Low	High	Low	High
Trees/acre	0.5 ¹	1	1	1	No	2.5	2.5	3	4
Size DBH/DRC	9"	10"	14"	14"	10"	14"	16"	12"	16"
Height (feet)	8'	10'	15'	25'	No	20'	25'	20'	30'
Dead trees down	Low	High	Low	High	All	Low	High	Low	High
Pieces/acre	2	2 ²	2	2	No	4	4	5	5
Size (diam.)	9"	10"	12"	12"	No	12"	12"	12"	12"
Length (feet)	8'	10'	15'	15'	No	16'	16'	16'	16'
Tree decadence	Low	High	Low	High	All	Low	High	Low	High
Trees/acre	No		No		No	No		No	
Number of tree canopies	SS/MS		SS/MS		SS	SS/MS		SS/MS	
Total BA, Square feet per acre	6	24	70	90	No	80	100	120	140
Total canopy cover (%)	20	35	40	50	50	50	60	60	70

NOTES: ¹ Dead limbs help make up dead material deficit.

² Unless removed for firewood or fire-burning activities.

³ In mixed corkbark fir and Engelmann spruce stands where Engelmann spruce is less than 50 percent compositions in the stand.

⁴ In mixed corkbark fir and Engelmann spruce stands where Engelmann spruce is 50 or more percent composition in the stand.

No: not determined SS: single storied MS: multi storied L: Live (trees in main canopy)

DBH =

DRC =

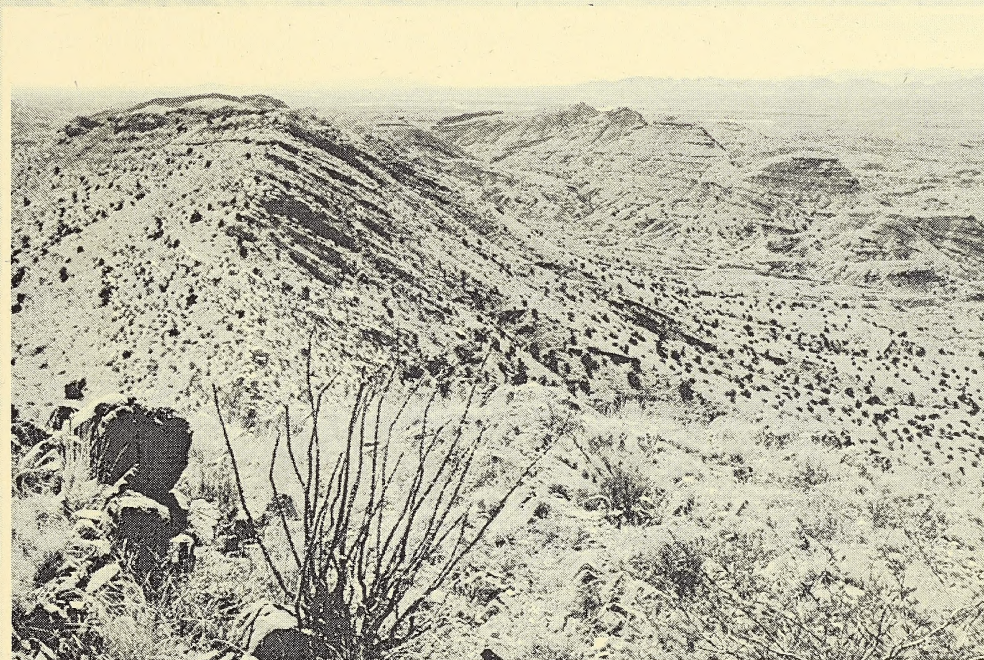
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- USDA Forest Service, Southwestern Region. 1992. Recommended Old-Growth Definitions and Descriptions and Old-Growth Allocation Procedure (Region 3).
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- Waichler, W.S., R.F. Miller, and P.S. Doescher. 2001. Community characteristics of old-growth western juniper woodlands. *Journal of Range Management*, 54:518-527.

Additional references are available for review at the Socorro Field Office.

Appendix 0

Analytical Assumptions



APPENDIX O

ANALYTICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This appendix provides definitions of impacts, additional assumptions, or other information that may be useful in understanding the approach to the impact analysis for each resource or resource use.

AIR QUALITY

Impact Definitions

An impact on air quality would occur when an action would result in (1) an increase in air pollutants that would exceed New Mexico or Federal ambient air quality standards, or (2) increased air emissions that would exceed Prevention of Significant Deterioration standards for Federal Class I areas.

GEOLOGY, CAVES AND KARST RESOURCES

Impact Definitions

Impacts to geological resources, caves, or karst resources generally would occur as a result of damage to or destruction of resources, such as excavation or construction that damages or removes resources having unusual geological, mineralogical, or paleontological information or natural scenic value.

SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES

Impact Definitions

The impacts on water resources possible under the alternatives might include changes in water quantity or quality to the extent that those changes affect domestic water supplies, livestock and other agricultural uses, and wildlife/natural vegetation use of water.

Soil resources can be impacted by management decisions, either by the changing erosive actions of wind and water or by limiting the productivity of the soil. Soil resources also feed back into water resources when excessive erosion and sediment transport degrades water quality or habitat.

Watershed impacts are an accumulation of all of these impacts such as to limit or enhance the ecology of an entire drainage basin. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy recognizes that many planning decisions need to consider impacts that are minor in any specific place but can cause serious damage to the land on a watershed basis.

Additional Assumptions

Short-term effects to the watershed and water resources are those that cause parameters such as groundwater levels or stream flow to exceed natural variations in these values but do not result in a change in the availability or designated use of the resources beyond the planning period of the resource management plan. For example, a diversion of stream flow to limit soil erosion would affect surface water quantity on the short term but would presumably not cause a permanent loss of the resource. A long-term effect would extend beyond the planning period; for example, the loss of topsoil, which requires thousands of years to develop naturally, would be a long-term effect.

VEGETATION

Impact Definitions

An impact on vegetation generally would occur due to (1) removal or crushing of vegetation, (2) soil erosion or reduction of soil or water quality due, or (3) the introduction of noxious or invasive weeds.

Additional Assumptions

It is assumed that the vegetation program would be managed in the same general manner under all alternatives in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies with the goal of meeting current standards. Before a site-specific project is authorized, Federal and BLM interagency consultation protocol requires that site-specific inventory and evaluation be completed and mitigation measures be identified to minimize adverse effects. Overall impacts could be minimized with mitigation measures including impact avoidance where practicable. Finally, it is assumed that ground-disturbing activities would result in a direct loss of vegetation.

WILDLIFE (INCLUDING WILD HORSES) AND RIPARIAN HABITAT

Impact Definitions

An impact on wildlife generally would occur if: (1) impacts to vegetation occur that would degrade, eliminate, or improve wildlife habitat, (2) direct mortality of individual wildlife occurs, (3) a management action results in the fragmentation of habitat or disruption of wildlife movement corridors, or conversely, in the consolidation of habitat (such as through land acquisition), or (4) an increase in human disturbance or access occurs in habitat areas.

Additional Assumptions

The wildlife and riparian habitat management program would be managed in the same general manner under all alternatives in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies with the goal of meeting current standards. Before a site-specific project is authorized, Federal and BLM requirements of interagency consultation, site-specific inventory, and evaluation would be completed and mitigation measures would be identified to minimize adverse effects. Overall impacts could be minimized with mitigation measures including impact avoidance where practicable.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Impact Definitions

Impacts to special status plant and wildlife species would occur if impacts occur as defined for vegetation and wildlife (as discussed above).

WILDLAND FIRE ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Impact Definitions

Impacts on wildlife fire ecology and management generally would occur if management actions (1) affect hazardous fuels build-up or reduction, (2) affect conditions for use of prescribed fire, (3) influence priorities or conditions for fire suppression activities.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impact Definitions

Impacts on cultural and paleontological resources generally would occur due to (1) loss or degradation of a resource through surface-disturbing activities or natural processes (such as soil erosion), or (2) increased human access, which exposes the resources to discovery, loss, or vandalism.

Additional Assumptions

The impact analysis assumed that regardless of which alternative is selected, the cultural resource program would continue to be implemented in accordance with BLM policies, which implement numerous Federal laws and regulations. The analysis of alternatives also assumed that the cultural resource program would continue to evaluate and allocate cultural resources to one of five use categories: (1) scientific use, (2) conservation for future use, (3) traditional use, (4) public use, and (5) experimental use. The extent of impacts on cultural resources among the alternatives considered varies in regard to two primary factors: (1) the types and intensities of uses of public land, especially the extent of ground disturbing activities, and (2) the extent of area specially designated to protect cultural resources.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Impact Definitions

The impact analysis considers the type of change that a management action might have on a visual setting or scenic resource, and whether the change occurs in an area of high viewer sensitivity. Impacts to visual resources generally occur if (1) a change to scenic quality occurs; (2) the changes to the landscape that could occur within an area do not support the Visual Resource Management (VRM) class objectives applicable to that area; and (3) a change to the visual setting occurs in an area of high sensitivity. Areas of high viewer sensitivity are considered to be more likely to experience impacts from changes to the visual setting, and occur in population centers such as Socorro and sensitive or unique areas such as special designations. An evaluation of potential impacts in areas of high viewer sensitivity considers duration of view and the experience the viewer is seeking (e.g., solitude, naturalness, scenic landscapes). Areas of low viewer sensitivity are generally near existing industrial uses such as mining areas.

Additional Assumptions

Because existing scenic quality data are not available, it is assumed that the existing VRM classes generally represent the existing scenic quality within the Planning Area; therefore, it is assumed that areas of higher scenic value generally occur within special designations. It is assumed that VRM class objectives will be implemented and enforced as designated, and that site-specific visual resource evaluations would be completed for each proposed project requiring a land use authorization consistent with guidance in BLM Manual 8430.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Impact Definitions

Impacts to wilderness characteristics generally would occur if there is an impact to naturalness, opportunities for solitude, or opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation. As such, impacts to wilderness characteristics are addressed indirectly through the analysis of recreation resources, visual

resources, and vegetation. The wilderness characteristics sections throughout Chapter 4 address potential impacts that are not characterized in other resource sections.

Additional Assumptions

As described in Chapter 3, wilderness characteristics within the Planning Area are found within wilderness study areas and sometimes in areas near or adjacent to wilderness study areas. Wilderness study areas would be managed under the Interim Management Plan and impacts would be controlled as a result.

LAND AND REALTY

Impact Definitions

The impact analysis considers impacts resulting from management on (1) land uses, and (2) BLM's ability to authorize uses (e.g., utilities). Impacts on land uses generally occur when management actions or prescriptions either (1) allow for the physical loss of land for a particular use or (2) preclude a change that might be warranted to meet National, State, or local needs (e.g., infrastructure). Impacts on mining/minerals management, recreation, wilderness characteristics, and grazing are discussed under those respective sections.

Additional Assumptions

It is assumed that applications for leases, permits, or easements for land authorizations would continue to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

FORESTRY AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Impact Definitions

Impacts on forestry and woodland management generally would occur as a result of (1) changes to the fire management program, (2) changes to vegetation that affect the woodland species, or (3) surface disturbance or other management actions that cause erosion or alter forest vegetation types.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND RANGE MANAGEMENT

Impact Definitions

Impacts to livestock grazing and range management could occur if (1) livestock grazing is excluded from an area, (2) available animal unit months are affected, or (3) the ability to construct or maintain range improvements is affected.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

Impact Definitions

Impacts to minerals or renewable energy resources generally would occur as a result of (1) utilization of mineral resources in a manner that does not offer the highest value for the use of public land to the people of the United States, such as permitting the sale of crushed rock from an unusual type of granite outcrop that may bring higher value as quarried building stone, and (2) withdrawal or prohibition of the use of the land for the extraction of mineral resources, such as protection of other environmental resources by prohibiting leasing, exploration, and development of mineral resources.

Additional Assumptions

In general, it is acknowledged that impacts adverse to mineral resources are beneficial to other resources and that mineral withdrawals or lease stipulations that limit mineral resource uses are protective of other resources determined to have greater value in the withdrawn area. Beneficial impacts to mineral resources may include development and sales of mineral resources such as leasing, exploration and development of oil and gas resources that increase jobs and stimulate the local economy, provide lease sales dollars to the general fund, and provide domestic sources of mineral, mineral material, and energy resources.

RECREATION

Impact Definitions

Impacts on recreation resources generally occur due to (1) increases or reductions in public access, which could promote, discourage, or eliminate recreation uses in an area; (2) changes to or enhancement of the recreation setting or experience; or (3) closure to some or all types of recreation use, either directly through management decisions or indirectly through competition or incompatibility with other uses.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Impact Definitions

Impacts on transportation and travel management generally would occur when (1) areas are closed or limited to public access, or (2) new access is created or expanded.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Impact Definitions

The social and economic impact of the alternatives are assessed in terms of the current contribution of BLM's management of public land relative to the social and economic environment of the region. Key economic impact variables include employment, income, economic dependency, and market and non-market economic value of resources to users within the social and economic study area and at the regional and national levels. Key social impact variables include population change, community and institutional structures, political and social resources, community and family changes, and community resources.

Additional Assumptions

Since the alternatives are broad desired outcomes and land use allocations, modeling specific fiscal impacts is not possible. For example, identifying certain lands as available for coal leasing does not clarify whether actual economic activity would be proposed in the future, or what the size and type of operation might be. Therefore, this analysis largely focuses on qualitative impacts that BLM management decisions might have on businesses and communities. Site-specific analysis of the potential impacts of future proposed actions would occur in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other mandates.

